

# SKRATCH

PUNK.HARDCORE.METAL.INDIE.SKATE.ART.EYECANDY

issue #129

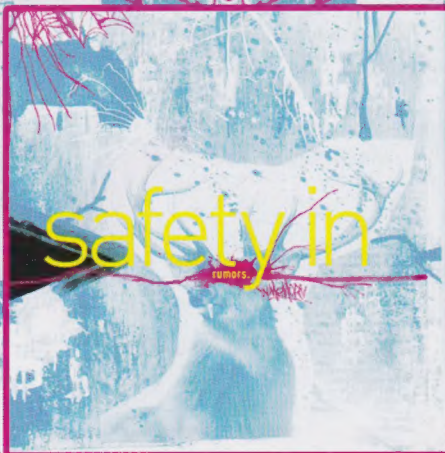
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(+44)

**A STATIC LULLABY  
AS I LAY DAYING  
BAD ASTRONAUT  
DEAD POETIC  
HIT THE LIGHTS  
IT DIES TODAY  
LOWER CLASS BRATS  
NEW MODEL ARMY  
RX BANDITS  
STREET DOGS  
GOODBYE VALENTINE  
DEAD CITY SHAKERS  
WE ARE THE FURY  
ALL IN  
OUR CORPSE DESTROYED  
THE TRANSIT WAR**

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SUN OCT 15

## SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN QUALIFIER

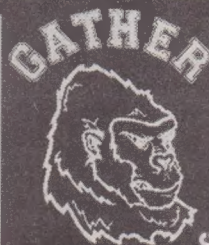
\*FINAL STAND\* \*LIVING DISORDER  
INNER CITY STRIFE \* SUNDAYS ARRIVAL  
COBRA COMMANDER  
NO REFORM \* NEVELLA  
AUBURNS RIDGE \* HIDDEN IN TIME  
ACCEPTED DEATH \* FLAMES EMBRACE  
UPSTART DESTRUCTO  
ONE LESS TRAGEDY

TUE OCT 17

## ONE NIGHT ONLY



FRI OCT 20



EYE OF  
JUDGEMENT  
SEVEN  
GENERATIONS

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SOCIALIZED CRUCIFIXION

SAT OCT 21

## the Vibrators

NAKED  
AGGRESSION

RESILIENCE

STINK  
EYE

The Giggaloops THE ELM STREET  
ROCKERS

SUN OCT 22

## SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN QUALIFIER

COMPLETE NEGLECT  
DARKNESS AWAITS  
SNAKES AND SPARKLERS  
THE SOUR GRAPES  
POGO BRATS \* OF ALL THINGS  
AS THE BLADE FALLS  
LIGHT THE FIGHT  
THIS PRESENT DARKNESS  
HI-DEF SQUAD \* CRACK FILTER  
T.R.S. \* D.R.A. \* AUBURNS RIDGE

SAT OCT 28

## SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN SEMIFINAL

Ashes Eternal \* The Ibis  
In/Humane \* The Noize  
They Speak Vanity  
In Desolate Skies  
Our Last Requiem  
Citizens On Patrol  
Behind Falling Ashes

TUE OCT 24

SOLID STATE  
Youngbloods

## the CHARIOT

DESTROY  
THE RUNNER

August Burns Red

TWELVE GAUGE VALENTINE

INHALE/EXHALE

MON OCT 30

## VICE SQUAD

SO UNLOVED



EVAN MURPHY THE STUFF

THU NOV 2

## DEATH THREAT

Coming of  
Age  
LIVING HELL  
BLOOD SWEETS SUI  
EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF ALC

FRI NOV 3

## MANNTIS OBLIGE

FIGHT TO THE LAST  
SHOTGUN WAYSIDE  
MESSAGE LOOP

SAT NOV 4

## The Bath of Resistance first blood

DEATHSTARX FORCE  
OF CHANGE

THU NOV 9

## Leftover Crack CITIZEN FISH

THE SAINTS HOME SICK  
CATHERINES ABORTION

FRI NOV 10

## LOS GATOS LOCOS

Undercity Kings  
CHAINSAW CANNIBALS  
plus special guests

SUN NOV 12

## ORACUER OUT CHIMBU OUT

(ex-Angelic Upstarts)  
Crucial Change  
BLIND ABUSE  
plus special guests

SAT NOV 11

## NO INNOCENT VICTIM

demise of Eros  
KINGSTON  
Gilligan  
TODAYFOREVER  
SEVER YOUR TIES

WED NOV 15

## INCANTATION

INTERNAL  
SUFFERING

SPINAL EXTRACTION

FRI NOV 17

## the Toasters

Phenomenauts  
THE GUILTY PARTIES  
THE B-SHARPS

SAT NOV 18

## THE BUSINESS

STRONG ARM &  
THE BULLIES  
RESILIENCE  
PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

SUN DEC 3

## THROUGH THE EYES OF THE DEAD

FROM A SECOND  
STORY WINDOW  
the  
ACQUA show IFHO PEDIES

FRI DEC 15

## Entombed

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# the SKATALITES



**THE AGGROLITES • THE ROUNDABOUTS**  
 november 19 → el rey theatre

# THE RAPTURE



**THE PRESETS**  
 november 20 → the fonda



november 20 → el rey theatre

DEATH + TAXES MAGAZINE PRESENTS

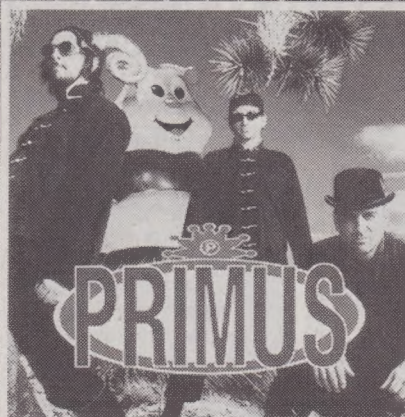
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**THE APPLESEED CAST • ACUTE • OWEN**  
 november 22 → el rey theatre



**CELEBRATION • BROTHERS AND SISTERS**  
 november 30 & december 1 → the fonda



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# THE LASHES

# ARMY OF FRESHMEN

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 december 8

el rey theatre

# KILL HANNAH

# PINK SPIDERS

# LOVE PARADE

# ACTION REACTION

december 11

el rey theatre





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SAT-NOV 18

INDIE ROCK \$14



**Straylight Run**

Matt Pond PA  
Street to Nowhere  
Kevin Devine

SUN-NOV 19

HARDCORE \$10

**Stick to Your Guns**

Too Pure To Die  
The Burning Season  
As Blood Runs Black  
Goodfellas

MON-NOV 20

HARDCORE \$12

**THE WARRIORS**

Remembering Never  
Full Blown Chaos  
War of Ages  
Now We Seige

TUE-NOV 21



WED-NOV 22

INDIE ROCK \$10

**Maxeen**

The Outline  
New Years Day  
Other Bands Tba

SAT-NOV 25

METAL / HARDCORE \$12

**Arsis**

All Shall Perish  
The Faceless  
Underneath the Gun  
Nuns with Guns

SUN-NOV 26

INDIE ROCK \$10



COBRA STARSHIP

WED-NOV 29

INDIE ROCK \$12



**Spitalfield**

Punchline  
Valencia  
All The Rage  
Peachcake

THU-NOV 30

INDIE ROCK \$10

the **COLOUR**  
**Delta Spirit**  
Plus Special Guests



FRI-DEC 1

INDIE ROCK \$13



**MY AMERICAN HEART**  
Pistolita • Action Action  
Danger:Radio • Goodbye Tomorrow

SAT-DEC 2

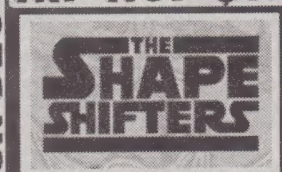
INDIE ROCK \$12



**WAKING ASHLAND**  
Forgive Durden • Lydia

SUN-DEC 3

HIP HOP \$10



WITH Grayskul • TBA

MON-DEC 4

INDIE ROCK \$10



FRI-DEC 8

PUNK ROCK \$15

**Strung Out**

Skyline Collapse • Pour Habbit  
Confessions of a Monster

SAT-DEC 9

PUNK ROCK \$10



SUN-DEC 10

HARDCORE \$10

**Cold World**

Outbreak  
Iron Age  
Plus TBA

WED-DEC 13

INDIE ROCK \$10

A CHANGE OF PACE



FRI-DEC 15

HARDCORE \$10

**FINAL FIGHT**



SAT-DEC 16

INDIE ROCK \$10

Greeley Estates



SAT-DEC 23

INDIE ROCK \$12

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THURSDAY 11/16

HELLO STRANGER

SOMETHING FOR ROCKETS

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FRIDAY 11/17 Part Time Punk presents:

The Slits

Demonstrations • Mika Miko  
Punky Reggae Party D.J.s

THURSDAY 11/30

MELVINS

Big Business

FRIDAY 11/24

MAD CADDIES  
Sicker Than Others

MONDAY 12/4

THROUGH THE EYES OF THE DEAD

FROM A SECOND STORY WINDOW  
THE ARACIA STRAIN  
IF HOPE DIES

MONDAY 11/27

Nightmare  
OK You  
Innaway E-K-U-K

SATURDAY 12/9

SPINRIET • TSK TSK

TUESDAY 11/28

the lovemakers  
GRAM RABBIT  
ON THE SURFACE

THURSDAY 12/14

the SLACKERS  
THE STRAYS

TUESDAY 12/19

Chencha  
Berrinches  
CD Release Show  
UNION 13  
The Black Rose Phantoms

WEDNESDAY 11/29  
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SO THEY SAY  
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**HINDER**  
Tuesday, December 18

Sunday, November 12



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TREVOR HALL  
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Friday, November 10  
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**JAMES HUNTER**  
KEATON SIMONS & TOM FREUND

Wednesday, Nov. 15  
**BITTER & SWEET**  
NATALIE WALKER • JOHN GOLD

Saturday, Nov. 4  
**JACKIE GREENE**

Friday, Nov. 17  
**STRAYLIGHT RUN**  
STREET TO NOWHERE • KEVIN DEVINE

Wednesday, Nov. 8  
**RAUL MALO**  
MOTHER SUPERIOR feat. DANIEL LANOIS

Thursday, Nov. 2  
**THE RECEIVING OF SIRENS**  
THE OUTLINE • YESTERDAY'S RISING

Thursday, Nov. 14  
**ERIC CHURCH**  
I SEE HAWKS IN L.A. • TRAVIS HOWARD

Sunday, Dec. 3  
**Corrine Bailey Rae**

WED 11/2  
Side of Jordan Presents... The Los Angeles with  
John Pizzello as  
**THE NIGHTWATCHMAN**  
HIJOSE DE LA TIERRA  
EXCESSIVE ACTS

SAT 11/4  
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BODY AFTERPARTY with  
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FRI 11/3  
**ZONK**  
CITRUS SESSIONS BAND  
THE ESTATE • DJ SOLUZ

TUE 11/2  
EVERYTHING '80s with  
DJ DAVID BASKAL

WED 11/3  
TEREZA  
LONDON • THE CHASE



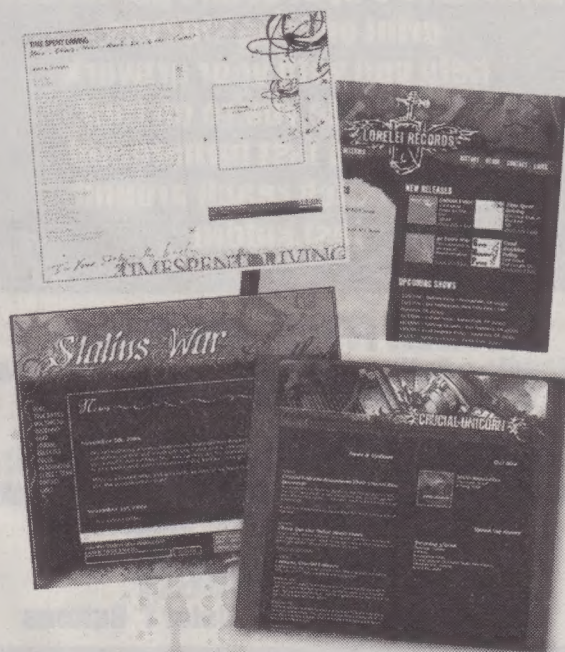


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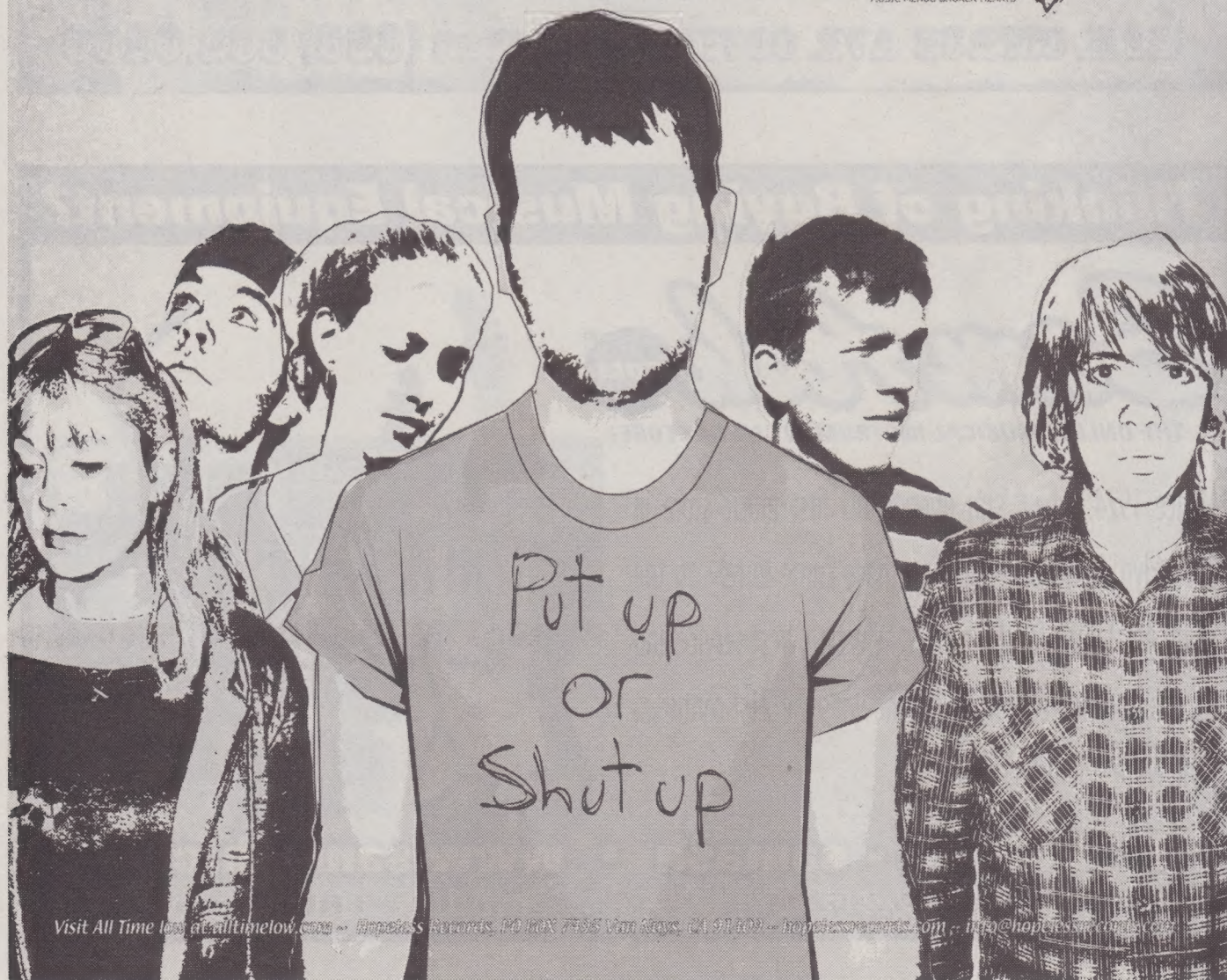
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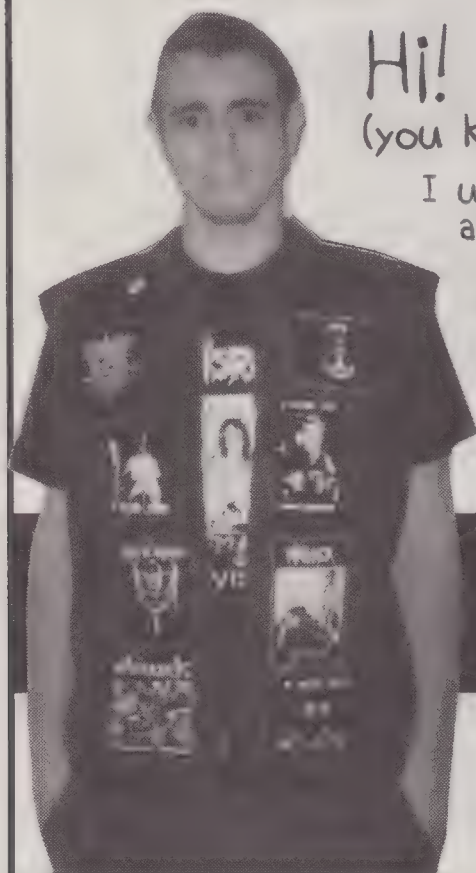


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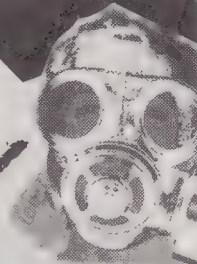
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Speak up. Tell us what you think. Write a letter.

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Email: [speakup@skratchmagazine.com](mailto:speakup@skratchmagazine.com)

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# THE NEWS



## MAD SPRING IN 2007

The Mad Caddies next-currently untitled full-length release has been slated for a tentative release of spring 2007.

## NEW SIGNING

Militia Group just signed the LA rock band, Everybody else. Go check out at <http://www.myspace.com/everybodyelse>

## ATARIS COME WITH NEW MANUAL

The Ataris have announced "that we have formed our own label, Isola Recordings, and that we have entered into an agreement with the Sanctuary Records Group for promotion, marketing and distribution of our future records." Their new record, "Welcome the Night" will be released in February 2007.

## MYSTERY SONICS

On December 12th, Sonic Youth is releasing a b-sides and rarities album titled "Destroyed Room: B-Sides And Rarities." The tracklist is still a mystery, we do know the songs will be chosen by the band. Someone we know is currently loving the advance copy!

## CANCELLED IN A NEW YORK MINUTE

Darkest Hour has cancelled the remainder of their shows on the Soilwork, etc. tour due to health issues. Here's a statement from the band:

"We are sorry to announce that we must cancel our upcoming shows in Pittsburgh, Rochester NY, and Detroit on our current tour with Soilwork, Mnemic, and Threat Signal. One of the us has a serious health issue that must be addressed immediately. We apologize to all the fans and the other

bands, but when you're on tour forever health has to come first. We will see everyone in the UK next month and everyone in the US with a new record next year."

## FALL OUT DOLLS

BandMerch, Inc. has announced a partnership with SOTA Toys to exclusively manufacture and distribute collectible dolls for each member of Fall Out Boy. On November

30th, These loveable or unloveable dolls will be available at Hot Topic, Spencer Gifts, and music stores nationwide.

## PLEASE DRIVE THRU

Socratic will be releasing a free 5 song EP in December on Drive Thru records

## PLUS 44 MAY MAKE ONE BLINK

Plus 44 [actually spelled (+44)] is a new band consisting of Mark Hoppus and Travis Barker of Blink-182, Shane Gallagher of The Nervous Return and Craig Fairbaugh of The Mercy Killers.

"If Blink was the daytime, Plus 44 is the nighttime. It's such a departure from Blink, but it's amazing. I play all the drums, but they're electronic drums, plus I play piano and keyboard on it. And I've been making beats for it. ..."

- Travis Barker (from MTV.com)

"... There's all kinds of stuff going on. Guitars mixed with keyboards, and electronic drums mixed with live drums. It's based on guitars and rhythms, and both Shane and Craig are great guitar players."

- Mark Hoppus (from MTV.com)

## UNEARTH, WIND, AND FIRE

Unearth will support Slayer on the group's upcoming North American tour, which will kick off in January. The following dates have been confirmed thus far, with many more announced soon::

1/25 Las Vegas, NV @ House Of Blues

1/26 Los Angeles, CA @ The Wiltern LG

## FEAR OF PLAYING LIVE

Fear Before The March Of Flames singer David Marion was injured during the group's San Diego show 3 weeks

ago. Bandmate Adam Fisher has issued the following account of Marion's injury:

"During our second song David was struck in the face with Mike's bass mid swing. Although that seems like something that is quite normal and not too rare the results were actually quite catastrophic. David was knocked out for longer than previous times this has happened. When he awoke he was spitting blood out in large amounts. We cleaned him up only to find that a hole had been ripped in his cheek. It basically looks as though he was pierced with a serrated knitting needle. In 100% honesty it was a pretty brutal sight. Somehow he managed to get up and finish the set but by the end the whole right side of his face was swollen to the point where he could barely open his right eye. He was taken to the hospital immediately. He was treated and received a catscan and was prescribed some pretty heavy antibiotics and heavy painkillers. It turns out because of the hole, air had gotten into his skin and puffed him out all the way from his collarbone up to above his eye socket. It's early now and David has just woken up but his exact quote was "I feel like 200 pounds of bird shit." It hurts for him to swallow and needless to say he's pretty bummed out. He is unsure of whether he will be able to play tonight. We as a band hate cancelling shows more than anything and David is the last to stand down because of pain, but if it hurts him bad enough to where he doesn't think he can do it his safety comes first. We'll try and keep you updated and we apologize in advance if we cannot play tonight. Again, we will only not play if it is 100% detrimental to David's health. Remember, it is a hole in his face that you could fit a small rodent through. It's not a scratch. Thank you for understanding and enjoy the rest of the bands!"

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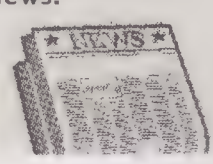
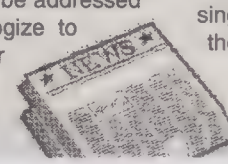
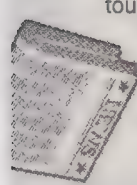
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1/6 Corona, CA @ Showcase Theatre

1/7 San Diego, CA @ Che Cafe w/ Final Fight, Lewd Acts, Retaliate

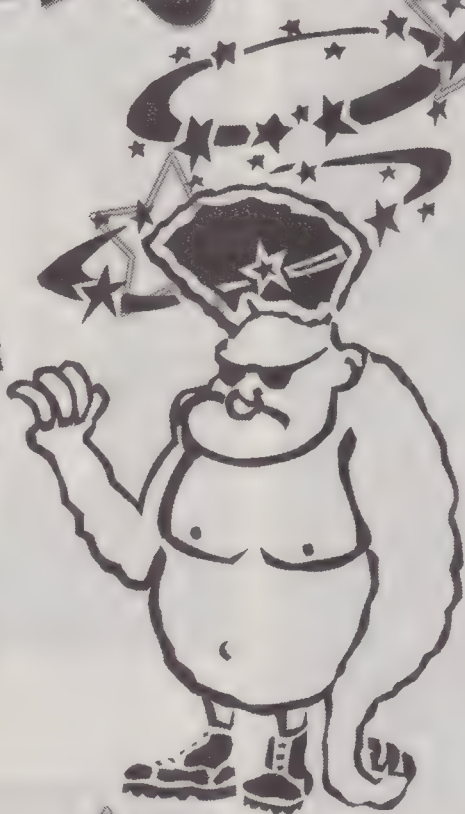
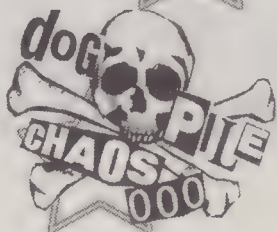
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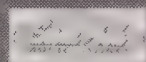
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# 'tis the season

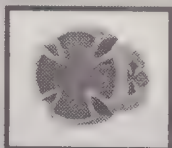
by renee a. mallett

The season of mass consumerism is upon us! Shoppers rejoice! Or maybe you hate shopping, and the thought of trying to find something your mom will actually like gives you nightmares. Either way, one thing is for sure: nobody wants to be fighting the frothing crowds at the mall this time of year or giving friends Abercrombie sweaters. This Christmas, avoid the crowds, avoid the mass-produced crap mall gifts, and put the Internet to work for you. Here is SKRATCH MAGAZINE's guide to the best places on the Web to get some unique, thoughtful, artsy gifts for everyone on your list.

## For the ladies:

**KaiAlise.com**—This Scottsdale, AZ, favorite is finally on the Web! Design a one-of-a-kind handbag for the lady on your list. Okay, give her a Kai Alise gift certificate so she can make one up herself. This boutique has dozens of styles and literally hundreds of funky fabrics to choose from—all at a decent price.

**ScottRadke.com**—Scott Radke (formerly featured in SKRATCH) now offers T-shirts and tank tops on his Website with one of his trademark creepy marionettes images across a black background.

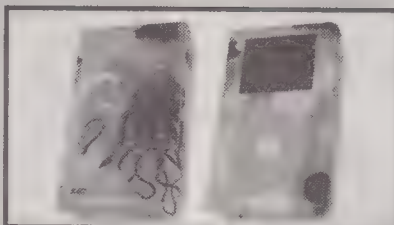


**Photoglassworks.etsy.com**—This shop has distinctive art-glass jewelry (from necklaces to earrings) that any girl would love to get. The styles range from art nouveau to Asian to some pieces incorporating images from Gustav Klimt. Photoglassworks jewelry shows how classic doesn't need to be boring.

## For the guys:



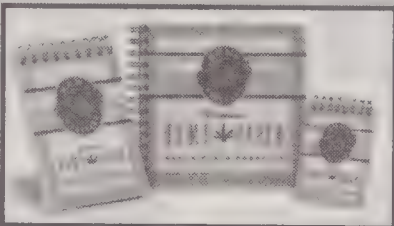
**Homepage.mac.com/jomophoto**—Go to the homepage of another artist formerly featured in SKRATCH, Joshua Morrisette, to purchase T-shirts, coffee mugs, and posters featuring his digital art.



**PotatoStamp.com** offers all kinds of goodies from acclaimed artist Jeff Soto, like prints of his work and podskins that will turn your iPod into a true work of art.

**Femmemetale.com** is home to Leslie Homan's tattoo-inspired men's jewelry collection, Heavy Metalwerks. Lately, Heavy Metalwerks jewelry has been spied gracing stars like Johnny Depp and Scott Wieland. You may not be a rock star, but that doesn't mean you can't accessorize like one.

## For the artist:

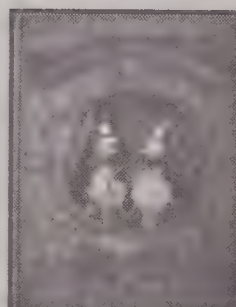


**The-naturalzone.com**—A great site for all natural, Earth-friendly sketchbooks, hemp computer paper, and journals—plus a ton of other items. This is a little company out to make a big difference!

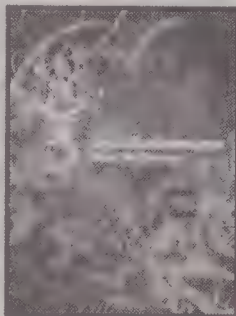
**Paperarts.com**—Crafters of fine handmade paper that is sure to inspire any artist. They also sell one-of-a-kind collage supplies.

## For the art-lover:

There are a ton of great books available from Amazon (or your local bookstore) by a plethora of artists that are sure to please the art-lover in your life. Here are some to look for:



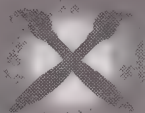
**EVERYTHING THAT CREEPS** by Elizabeth McGrath features her carnival/circus/sideshow-inspired sculptures.



**INSTALLATIONVIEW** by Ryan McGinness gives some insight into the process of the artist. A must-have for fans who like to see the line blurred between graphic design and fine arts.



**SUPPLY AND DEMAND: THE ART OF SHEPARD FAIREY** by Shepard Fairey covers the whole of this groundbreaking artist's 17-year career through the eyes of esteemed critics and writers.



## FEATURED ARTISTS

100 essential art books and artists that every art lover should have in their collection



# banksy: quality vandalism?

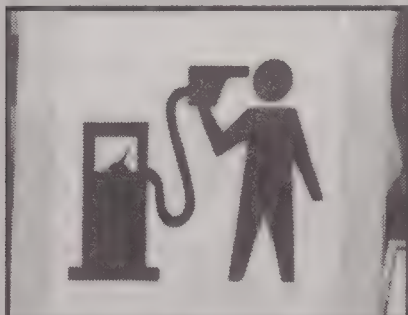
by renee a. mallett

Self-described art terrorist Banksy has been busy. In September he replaced more than 500 copies of Paris Hilton's debut album in 50 different stores in the United Kingdom with his own works of art. Banksy's cover art on his version of PARIS showed the angular celebuntante and shameless self-promoter topless or with the head of a chihuahua. Some copies showed the ditzzy star getting out of an expensive car surrounded by homeless people with the caption, "90% of success is just showing up." The controversial

British Museum showing primitive cave people pushing shopping carts became such a hit that the museum placed it in their permanent collection.

Needless to say, not everyone thinks what Banksy does is art. His graffiti work, which often takes a political bent and has appeared in Palestine and in Mexican areas affected by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, has been dismissed and even persecuted as simple vandalism. Despite the artist's anti-corporate, anti-commercialism activism, he demands high prices from the

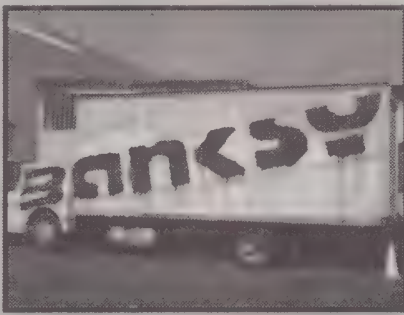
have declared him a sellout. Some groups hand out fliers outside his shows and point out what they call the hypocrisy of the "protest" artist selling his work for large profits. Banksy's recent Barely Legal show in Los Angeles raised the eyebrows of animal-rights activists when he painted a live elephant for display. In a hate e-mail shown on Banksy's Website, one person described it as animal abuse and a "ridiculous extravaganza." It's also not the first live animal the graffiti artist has painted on: one of his earliest shows had a cow with a mockery of Andy Warhol's art painted onto it.



artist dubbed the tracks, remixes of the Danger Mouse theme, with names like "Why am I famous?" and "What have I done?" Several copies of Banksy's PARIS were bought before the subterfuge was discovered and are fetching high prices on auction sites like eBay.

Most culturejammers would have considered the prank their good deed for the year and left it at that, but only a few short weeks later Banksy was back at it. This time he dressed a dummy in gear reminiscent of a Guantanamo Bay detainee, complete with orange prisoner jumpsuit, black hood, and handcuffs. Somehow he managed to hang the effigy within Disney's Big Thunder Railroad ride at their park in California. It's unclear how long the dummy was there before park officials were notified.

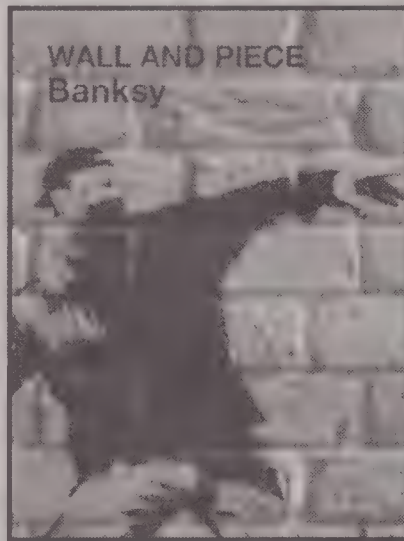
These are not the first—and undoubtedly not the last—of Banksy's pranks. This British artist has become as famous for them as he is for the graffiti stencil art that started his career. His high-profile pranks make it clear that we're all lucky Banksy has decided to be an artist and not a thief. At the London Zoo he climbed into the penguin exhibit and marked the enclosure "We're bored of fish." He has covertly hung his own paintings in London's Tate Museum and the Louvre, as well as in New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, and the American Museum of Natural History. No one is sure how he pulls these capers off unnoticed, and for the most part the paintings are removed as soon as they're found; but one painting that Banksy surreptitiously placed in the



charities he has done work for (Greenpeace among them) and is rumored to have done work for multinational corporations like Puma. The artist hotly denies the allegations, but many activists

Fueling the controversy is the fact that the real identity of Banksy is one of the best-kept secrets in the art world (coming in second only to New York's original Guerilla Girls). Several publications have "outed" the artist as one person or another, but as they each name a different person, so it's hard to take any of them seriously.

Regardless of who Banksy actually is, he has achieved cult status among graffiti-art aficionados and celebrities alike. Everyone from artists like Shepard Fairey to actors like Brad Pitt has something to say about Banksy, his over-the-top political statements, and his art. Like with many artists who achieve a fame that reaches outside the tightly-knit circle of the art community, the case could be made that Banksy the icon has blinded people to Banksy the artist. Still, that's pretty



impressive for a man who has never posed for a photograph or told anyone his real name.





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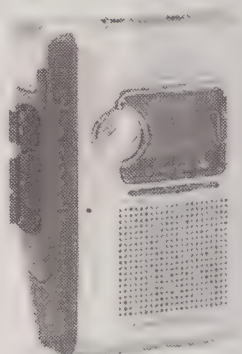


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# {Interviews}



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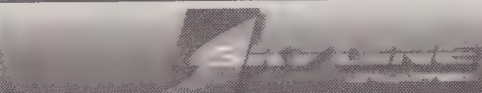
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(+44)  
by Janelle Jones

Get one thing straight: (+44) is NOT a continuation of—nor a complete divorce from—blink-182, vocalist/bassist Mark Hoppus and drummer Travis Barker's previous, sorta successful (!) band. Rather, the affable frontman views it as the next step for the duo + new bandmates guitarists Craig Fairbaugh (The Forgotten, Lars Frederiksen and the Bastards) and Shane Gallagher (The Nervous Return). Mark "loves every inch of" their debut LP, **WHEN YOUR HEART STOPS BEATING**, and can't wait for the public at large to hear it.

**SKRATCH:** I don't wanna get too much into the whole blink thing, but I was just wondering: towards the latter stages, did you feel you had to (I don't wanna say pander to fans, but like, you kinda had to write in a manner expected of you?

**MARK:** Not in the end. The most I ever felt like that was when we were writing the **TAKE OFF YOUR PANTS AND JACKET** album—and that wasn't even like I felt we

had to. I just think we did because we weren't all the way ready to lash out and try all the different ideas we wanted to.

But I never felt restricted in any way with blink-182. I think we definitely were comfortable in our roles in blink-182. I think that we were trying as much different stuff as we wanted to; but I don't think we necessarily really pushed ourselves as far as we could've. But I never felt like I had to be anything specifically; I never had to pander to what people thought blink-182 was going to be.

**SKRATCH:** So now with this band you're pushing yourselves further.

**MARK:** I feel like it, definitely. I feel like by necessity we were kinda forced to do things that we wouldn't normally do and didn't do in blink. And like I said, I never felt like I was restricted in any way, but I think we kinda restricted ourselves without knowing it.

**SKRATCH:** I didn't get

to hear the record, but the songs you have on the Internet...Like "Lycanthrope": it's catchy and fast, but there's a definite somberness to it.

**MARK:** Yeah, there's definitely a lot of dark moments on the record. [Laughs] There are definitely some uplifting, positive songs, like "When Your Heart Stops Beating" and "Cliff Diving"; and there are some up-tempo songs with some downer lyrics; and then there's some straight downer, kick-you-in-the-guts kind of songs.

**SKRATCH:** Would you say there are any prevalent themes on the record?

**MARK:** I wouldn't say there's necessarily a prevalent theme to the whole record. I feel the record's pretty schizophrenic, kind of a roller-coaster ride. There's a bunch of different things going on. I don't think it really rests on any one subject or mood or anything for too

long. It takes you to a bunch of different places. Like, we didn't sit down and say, "This is gonna be our dark, brooding record" or anything. There are some songs that are like that, there are some songs that are high-energy. There are some songs that are more mid-tempo. I like that about the record.

**SKRATCH:** You also had an electronic mix. Do you have a couple of electronic songs on there?

**MARK:** Yeah, there are some songs that are more electronic than the songs that have leaked out. The songs that leaked are pretty much the more straight-forward rock songs, and the rest of the stuff on the record has a lot more experimentation going on. There's a song called "Make You Smile" that's very electronic; and "Little Death" has a lot more programming bits to it, [as do] a few other songs.

**SKRATCH:** Do you think you would've ever done that in the past?

**MARK:** I don't know. I think that when it came to that stuff, Travis and I were just ready to embrace the whole electronic side of all the possibilities you can do with the technology

available now.

**SKRATCH:** But while writing the record, did you feel much pressure-like, that it might be compared to stuff you've done previously?

**MARK:** Not at all. There were some songs on the record [to which] Travis and I listened back and were like, "Oh my god, that sounds like nothing we've ever done before—and it sounds so different from blink," and we were really happy with that. And then there were some songs on the record when we finished it that sounded like the next step from what we were doing in blink-182—and that was fine, as well. We were happy with our musical past in blink-182. We're not trying to say, "Forget everything we've done before and just listen to what we're doing now." We were two-thirds of that band, so the musical sensibilities we brought to that band we're going to bring to this band, as well. But things are also gonna be different, because we're writing songs with two new people.

**SKRATCH:** Yeah. How



think Shane came in maybe three or four weeks into the process, and he was part of all the songs. And Craig came in probably five or six months towards the end of the record-and from the day he came in he

was helping write stuff, as well. It was very collaborative as a whole. Anybody could put in their two cents on every single track.

**SKRATCH:** I saw a quote from Travis

saying that you guys are the "underdogs" again. What does he mean by that(that you guys have something to prove)?

**MARK:** Just that we're starting the band from the ground up, and we're getting out there and hitting the road and treating it like a whole new experience. We're the underdogs, we're playing small clubs and climbing our way back up.

**SKRATCH:** But by the same token, you guys already have the video on TRL.

**MARK:** We're definitely blessed that we have the history with what we've done and people are gonna give us at least a listen. We have that going for us. But ultimately the album is relying on the strength of the songs. Having two of us be from blink-182 will open the door, but it's up to our music and our work ethic to pass through that.

**SKRATCH:** Definitely. You're in your 30s now. How do you view being in a band now, as opposed to how you felt 15 years ago?

**MARK:** I've loved every second of being in bands from the minute I was ever in a band, and I still feel blessed. And it's actually been really cool to be forced again to start from square one, because it really has reminded us of how lucky we are to be where we're at. It keeps us hungry and it keeps us humble, and we're very fortunate to get to do what we like.

**SKRATCH:** Are you liking this band's being a four-piece?

**MARK:** I'm loving it. It's great onstage, because it has a much thicker, richer guitar sound. And you can do a lot of things-like, you can have a rhythm track with an ~~extra lead going on top~~ of it. When we were playing in blink, we had to choose between, "Okay, this part we're gonna play the chords, and then this part we're gonna do the lead parts. Also, just having four

people involved in this band is [having] more hands on the actual art.

**SKRATCH:** Different points of view.

**MARK:** Yeah. Shane has a very dissonant sense about music. He always goes for the minor chords and the really dissonant, weird-sounding stuff-which is different than anything I've ever been part of, so it pushes me as a songwriter and as a musician. And Craig has this gnarly punk-rock energy about him, just an in-your-face kinda thing that adds a whole new dimension to the music. So it's really great to write with these guys, because they bring such a different style than I'm used to writing.

After closing out 2006 with a U.S. tour, (+44) are planning to take on the world (and if Mark has his way, the Warped Tour in '07).

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**A Static Lullaby**  
by Melanic Roberts

Joe Brown (vocals) and Dan Arnold (guitar/vocals) of A Static Lullaby are zombies. Well, I'm pretty sure they are. For example, you know how zombies can never be stopped, how when you try to shoot them, stab them, or shut the door in their faces and scream in horror that nothing works? Brown and Arnold are kind of like that, with their Chino Hills-born screamo band. Not even after being picked up and dropped by a major label did they stop. Losing original members Phil Pirrone (bass/vocals), Nate Lindeman (guitar), and Brett Dinovo (drums) to other projects didn't halt them. And of course, there're the blood-curdling screams. But Brown seemed a very convincing nice guy when he talked with SKRATCH.

**SKRATCH: The new record-how are you feeling about it?**

JOE: I've never been more proud of anything I've done. It is our best work to date. To go through the emotional roller-coaster that I went through last year, with the old band members, and trying to redefine

myself.... But the record came out, and the fans on MySpace are saying good things.

**SKRATCH: Sounds like you exorcised some demons in those tracks.**

JOE: Well, "Hang 'Em High" was a direct relationship with the last five years of a band and trying to redefine myself [ & ] But I also wrote a series of poems & I took a lot of the poems and formed them into lyrics. And some of the songs are made-up ideas. [ & ] It's the whole love lost/tragedy thing. I've never been the type of person to say, "Oh, this girl fucked me up" or "My best friend screwed me over." Instead, I try to put it in a "fuck you" type of way. I'm able to paint pictures in my mind and make up scenarios. It's fun to write that way.

**SKRATCH: What made you go back into the studio with Producer Steve Evetts (Hatebreed, Saves the Day)?**

JOE: Since the first record, I've never known anything better than the experience of working with him. I severely wanted him on this record. I feel like Steve understands A Static Lullaby, so it was important to get back to the [band's] roots and salvage what I could, to bring back the band to what it was before. This band isn't going to work with anyone else. As long as I make records, I intend to make records with Steve. [ & ] He's just so talented, and that's that.

**SKRATCH: ASL has played a serious game of musical chairs, with original members, Phil, Nate, and Brett no longer in**

**the game. That must have been rough.**

JOE: Nobody ever wants to spend years with someone and have it end; any type of break-up is hard. They went their [own] ways, and I was supportive. And then song reviews started coming back. Things got hot, and there was arguing back and forth. So, I left it. I didn't speak to anyone. [Then] I went to a party, and we had a conversation. I said, "I'm here [for you], I grew up with you. You make the music you want, and I'm going to continue making [music with] A Static Lullaby." I see it as a blessing. The transition [...] new members who are so fantastic. Not that I couldn't [change] with the other guys, but [having new 'members] allowed me to recreate myself and be creative again.

**SKRATCH: How are John Death (guitar/vocals), Dane Poppin (bass/vocals), and Jarrod Alexander (drums) working out?**

JOE: It's working out fantastic. Jarrod was our drummer for a good year. I learned a lot about music, music scumbags...just a lot about people. I've never felt more dirty and raped than having to tell my drummer [Jarrod] that he couldn't be on the record. It was inner conflict, and he didn't play on FASO LATIDO (Columbia Records). I kept in contact with Jarrod, though. Jarrod's my favorite drummer, so it worked out. John's a very, very, very talented kid. John and Dane are 19 and 20, and they've got that fire. They're young (not that I'm THAT old at 24), [and] I wanted to get some guys who weren't road dogs, who'd been on the road for years. [ & ] They're just so stoked to play and really excited about the music they're playing.

**SKRATCH: Welcome back to the indie world with your new label, Fearless Records. Was it a big difference dealing with a major?**

JOE: [ & ] I don't have too much to say about [major labels]. I'll never go back, I'll say that. I saw a lot of ugliness that I've never seen before [by] going up there.

**SKRATCH: New record, new lineup, new label.... What can old ASL fans expect with all these changes?**

JOE: I read MySpace, and a lot of [fans] say it's back, [that the new record] is an "A Static Lullaby" record. This record is more developed. Dan and I had a [lot of influence on the] writing, and it's a heavier record. It's the most well-rounded record. [Fans will] be happy with it for sure.

**SKRATCH: Now you're saddling up for tour.**

JOE: [Attempting a Texan accent] Yep. Got my boots on.

**SKRATCH: Where you heading to?**

JOE: California, Arizona, then back around to California, playing the last show at the Troubadour [in L.A.].

**SKRATCH: If you could bring any band back into existence, who would it be?**

JOE: Pantera, in every way, shape, and form.

Go to [www.astaticlullaby.com](http://www.astaticlullaby.com) to learn more about the October release of A Static Lullaby's self-titled album. But WAIT! What if it's a trap and it's all part of a plan to lure us in and infect us with their music? Man, I've been watching too many horror movies lately. To comment on this or any other interview you see in

SKRATCH, feel free to email us at

**"I SAW A LOT OF UGLINESS  
THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE"**





# AS I LAY DYING

As I Lay Dying  
by Justin Sellout

After forming in early 2001, As I Lay Dying promptly recorded their debut full-length, *BENEATH THE ENCASING OF ASHES*, on Pluto Records and commenced extensive touring to support it. After releasing an EP on the same label, the band was picked up by Metal Blade Records and released *FRAIL WORDS COLLAPSE*. After more rigorous touring, the band hunkered down and carved out the musical firecracker that is *SHADOWS ARE SECURITY*, released by Metal Blade in 2005. As I Lay Dying are currently planning to throw the finishing touches on a new record when they return after the holiday season upon returning from a spin around Europe.

I spoke to vocalist Tim Lambesis about their upcoming European tour and the forthcoming album.

SKRATCH: Where did the

name of the band originate?

TIM: We pulled the name from the William Faulkner novel. All we took is the name; none of our lyrics have anything to do with the book.

SKRATCH: What have you guys been doing recently?

TIM: Well, we're heading out to Europe really soon. We basically wanted to write the songs for the new record before we go to Europe. When we get back from touring, we're going into the studio to actually record it and put the finishing touches on it. While in Europe we're going to be touring with Bullet for My Valentine and will be supporting them.

SKRATCH: How would you describe the songs that are coming together for this record, as compared to songs from your previous records?

TIM: Well, I think that these are faster in general. Our goal has always been just to push ourselves and to progress and get better at our instruments. We always want to take each part to the extreme and make it as good as we can. Our music has always been melodic as well as extreme, especially in the guitar. We always had that element of melody there that I want people to hear and have stuck in the heads. We've also always had that harder, darker side-to use a cliché, the brutal part to our songs. We want more diversity with the songs, and I feel they have progressed.





**SKRATCH:** What do you draw your lyrical inspiration from? Do you usually write about one topic for a long period of time, or do you draw from everyday experiences?

**TIM:** I tend to write about the things that I or people I am close to are going through. I write about my own experiences and the relationships going on around me. One topic that I wrote about recently was how in this world it seems that we all tend to follow one another. Socially, we just follow what everyone else is doing. Individuality seems to be fading out. I usually just write about topics that are personal to me.

**SKRATCH:** What inspired you to want to become a singer?

**TIM:** Well, in bands I was in before and at the beginning of this band, I had played guitar and wrote the songs that way. We had a problem finding a vocalist that I was comfortable backing and that I felt comfortable with in the band, so when it came time to record the vocals, I just did them myself, and then things evolved into the way

they are now.

**SKRATCH:** Do you have any vocal role models or vocalists that you look up to?

**TIM:** I don't have just one person that I specifically look up to; I've always just admired the vocalists that carried a lot of passion in their voice. I like being able to listen to a vocalist and hear the passion coming from his voice and have always admired singers who could do that—especially on a recording, which is usually such a stale environment. Perfect pitch doesn't really mean anything without emotion behind it.

**SKRATCH:** When you started the band, did you foresee yourselves getting this far?

**TIM:** No, when we started our goal was to travel the country and hopefully not lose money. To think that we can do that now and be an underground band and sell thousands of records is pretty unbelievable.

**SKRATCH:** What was it like playing the Taste of Chaos tour?

**TIM:** The tour is full of more heavy

and post-hardcore acts, and sometimes it was hard to tell how the crowd reacted. One of the best indicators of a crowd reaction is merchandise sales, and our like.

**SKRATCH:** How did things come about with Metal Blade Records?

## **“PERFECT PITCH DOESN'T REALLY MEAN ANYTHING WITHOUT EMOTION BEHIND IT.”**

totals came out on top on a lot of nights.

**SKRATCH:** What do you think about the Internet as a part of the music industry?

**TIM:** I think downloading is good to find out if you like a band, but if you like them, you should go support them and buy their album. I know too many times I've gone to a store and come home with a CD I didn't like, so in part downloading protects people from buying something that they aren't going to

**TIM:** Well, we released a full-length and an EP on Pluto Records and toured behind them. It definitely showed our work ethic. We sent out demos to a bunch of labels, and Metal Blade showed interest. It was (and I feel it still is) the best choice for us.

To all those in Europe, be sure to catch As I Lay Dying on tour, and keep a lookout for the new album in the new year.

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**SKRATCH:** As half the album was written before Derrick's death and half after, do you think it will be clear to fans which songs were written at which point?

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# DEAD POETIC

## Dead Poetic

by Brandon Russell

Midwestern rockers Dead Poetic are God-fearing Christians, spreading the gospel with guitars. They are screamo-friendly and suffer from some dark, interpersonal conflicts that keep causing them to cancel tours. Dead Poetic are all these things, yet Dead Poetic are none of these things. As evidenced by their newest record, VICES, if you're going to label Dead Poetic, label them "unlabelable." Unlabelable because their newest effort on Tooth & Nail Records takes a 130-degree turn from anything they have done in the past. Unlabelable because they vocally refuse to be dropped into the safe and shallow end of the ever-holy Christian rock kiddie pool. Unlabelable, most clearly, because there isn't a scream to be found on the newest record. Dead Poetic are the shapeshifters of modern rock. After their last album, NEW MEDICINES, they disbanded,

with a promise to return from death—living, thriving, and back. Now, when they will want to hear 20 years from now. Think the first two songs on Nural's WEIGHT OF THE WORLD before fast drum beats and cavernous, pounding guitars are replaced with sappy "one, two, I love you" emo anthems. This is what that record could have been, thanks to the production work of Deftones Chino Moreno, with a little Silverchair and David Bowie thrown in for originality's sake.

I caught up with vocalist Brandon Rike and got the scoop on recently-cancelled tours, the band's change in direction, and VICES.

**SKRATCH:** You have described VICES as the record you always wanted to make. Why now, and what held Dead Poetic back in the past?

**BRANDON:** Well, I think the member changes we've made are a huge part. That's not all of it, but it

certainly had impact. You know, you grow up and evolve. Our first record was done our senior year of high school. I would call it green. You understand? It was influenced by stuff like Blindside and Deftones. It had a lot of emotion. Then with the next record we tried to perfect the style and genre we kind of got thrown into—that screamo label. That's funny, because we watched screamo being created, and now we were lumped into it. But NEW MEDICINES was basically just perfecting that sound that we started on the first record. Then VICES came up, and we all agreed we wanted to make a rock 'n' roll record we would still enjoy when we're 30 or 40 years old. It's way more natural this way.

**SKRATCH:** Between VICES and the previous album, you guys briefly fell apart. What happened?

**BRANDON:** People growing up and growing apart—no juicy drama. People were just being honest with themselves and what they needed

from life. The transition was tough. It was tough on my life, and it sucks that happened. In the music industry, the minute you sign a record contract, it becomes a business. Luckily, we came out of that mess with our strongest record yet.

**SKRATCH:** How did you hook up with Deftones' Chino Moreno on VICES?

**BRANDON:** We have a lot of friends in Sacramento, and one of them gave him a big stack of CDs because he was interested in producing hungry young bands—you know, bands that weren't as jaded as he was at the time. It was really cool, man. It was the coolest, most relaxed vibe in the studio. It's definitely something I'd like to do again.

**SKRATCH:** To the chagrin of fans, you guys just dropped off The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus tour. Would you mind filling us in on why?

**BRANDON:** A lot of people want



juicy details, but basically, in the music industry, you need to put your life into perspective at times. I just got married-like, JUST got married, six months ago-and a few of us have kids and stuff. We wanted to be with our families at the holidays. It's all about not letting the music industry push you around-and for me that meant putting my family in front. If you don't, you are just following orders from the music industry. It sucks, because it would have been a great tour right at the same time of the release of our new record, but in life you gotta do what you gotta do.

**SKRATCH:** Dead Poetic is associated closely with their religious beliefs. Why is it that the music wizards and powers that be are all so eager to drop the religious label? You don't see a band like Bad Religion described straight off as atheist. It always seems to be this way, even if there isn't a strong religious message in the music.

**BRANDON:** The Christian music industry is a huge industry. Taking that label opens you up to so much publicity and money, and it's something we're trying to get away

from. If we did readily take that label, we would make so much money, but now we don't make any money. Like, the churches will pay you so much money to come play. To us, it seems like a fake way to make it, it seems like an easy way out, you know? We've gone through phases trying to get rid of the Christian label. Then again, it's like, "I'm Christian, we're all Christian, so we're not being honest with ourselves." Really, I'm past trying to prove these things to people.

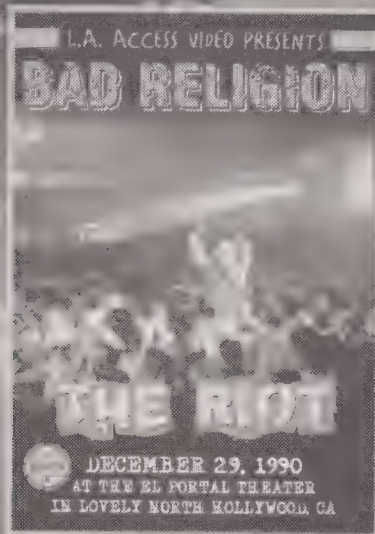
Anger, [Laughs] my own anger. Anger for what I am doing in life-for searching for priorities. Anger for wondering if this industry is pushing me around. Also, being a Christian and sinning. So many Christians see us as spotless. I try to show that I am doing my best, but I am not spotless. I have serious crap in my head, just like anyone else-but I want to show that God forgives everyone. It's my horribly unconventional version of the ministry.

**VICES** is available at [www.interpunk.com](http://www.interpunk.com), at record stores everywhere or from Tooth & Nail Records at [www.toothandnail.com](http://www.toothandnail.com).

**SKRATCH:** And finally, we all know struggle and, in effect, vices motivate art. What vices fuel this new album?

**BRANDON:**

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## Hit the Lights

by Ashley Decker

Serious and boring are flaws, and Hit the Lights is flawless. This Ohio-based five-piece pop-punk band is full of personality and is out there not only to have a good time but to make sure that everyone else does, too. With **THIS IS A STICK UP & DON'T MAKE IT A MURDER** (April 2006), Hit the Lights has managed to tour nearly nonstop for over a year and will soon tour for the first time overseas. With September being Hit the Lights Appreciation Month, the band celebrates their third year together and tell us just how they did it.

**SKRATCH: Did you do anything special on your band's third birthday?**

OMAR: [Reaches for the voice recorder] Wait a second. Is this recording? Can I hold it?

**SKRATCH: Yes, and sure.**

OMAR: [Speaks into voice recorder while holding it] All right. What did we do for our third birthday? We all went to Chuck E Cheese's and requested to dress up like the Chuck E Cheese animals and perform a song.

NICK: We were the robots, and we did their

We've had car accidents and turmoil inside the band. To me, it seems longer when you experience that stuff; and you go through all that sour stuff that the sweet taste is so much sweeter. [...] We've been through a lot together.

**SKRATCH: What are your most memorable moments as a band?**

OMAR: Bamboozle '06 was a huge thing for us. It was a mile marker as a band, because we played in front of thousands and thousands of people, and it felt so good.

NICK: There are definitely a lot of experiences, like flipping a trailer, [and] blowing tires in the middle of nowhere and meeting the weirdest people ever. Touring with New Found Glory is pretty rad.

**SKRATCH: Have any of you seen your video for "Body Bag"?**

COLIN: We actually haven't seen it on television yet. It sucks, because that's a big deal, and none of us have seen it.

OMAR: We have been touring since the video came on and a year before that; we have been on the road constantly.

NICK: We haven't been at home and been able to watch it. I told

guitar player] You ain't Spanish!

ALL: Poser!

**SKRATCH: How did you come up with the title "THIS IS A STICK UP & DON'T MAKE IT A MURDER"?**

NICK: I was watching a DVD called BUM FIGHTS, and there was a knock off called BUM HUNTER.

There was this one part where they took bums and had them run through an obstacle course and had to put on a mask and shout out a threat, and the guy said, "This is a stick-up. Don't make it a murder"-and I thought it was the funniest thing I have ever seen in my entire life; and it stuck with me. It was just fun, more fun than anything!

OMAR: Yeah, and it's also the name of a song that is (not coincidentally) on our record, but you can catch on any of those illegally-downloading vehicles.

NICK: Don't tell Lars, though.

OMAR: Yeah, don't tell Lars, or he will get pissed!

**SKRATCH: Are there any tracks that you feel deserve special attention?**

DAVE: There's a track called "It's All

the Rage". I actually had a lot to do with

OMAR: After this U.S. tour that we are on with New Found Glory, Early November, and Cartel, we actually have a week off. Then we go to the U.K. and then come home right before the holidays. It's going to be our first time off since last year. We're going to have the holidays and January off, so we're going to start writing and working on our new record.

**SKRATCH: Any unusual habits?**

NICK: Omar likes to wet toilet paper before his last wipe. I love to talk in my sleep. When I'm drunk and fall asleep. I talk about weird stuff and creep the guys out.

COLIN: I don't fart. I hate it when they fart in the van. It pisses me off. It smells so bad. It bums me out.

**SKRATCH: What are your favorite Thanksgiving foods?**

DAVE: Sweet yams.

COLIN: Mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing and turkey...

OMAR: You're taking everything.

COLIN: I know, but that's what I like.

NICK: My favorite is garlic mashed potatoes and the g r a y g r a y. I don't mind the



## Hit the Lights

"We did high five a lot."

song, the Chuck E song. OMAR: Sing it a little bit.

NICK: [Sings] Chuck E Cheese song. We like pizza and

DAVE: [Hollers] We're gonna eat some pizza!

NICK: [Continues to sing where he left off]

...Breadsticks, too, sometimes, unless your allergic to bread. And then we have a salad.

DAVE: We're going to roll around in the balls. BALL PIT, BALL PIT!

NICK: In all honesty, we did go out and get something to eat, and we celebrated. We went to TGI Fridays.

OMAR: Three years is a long time for a band nowadays. So we all had a high-five fest.

NICK: We did high five a lot.

**SKRATCH: What are some of the obstacles you have had to overcome over the years?**

NICK: We toured a long time before we were even signed. I think we went through a whole lot. We tried to do stuff ourselves, because we were taught that's how you do it, how you get by.

DAVE: We flipped a trailer one time. That was interesting.

OMAR: We've done it all.

my parents about it, and they were pretty stoked about it.

NICK: Parents are stoked on it. Our parents all had a little party and watched it.

OMAR: [Yells as Nate approaches] Nate! This is our drummer, Nate!

NATE: Hi, I'm old.

OMAR: Nate turned 25 yesterday. He just celebrated a birthday. Give it up for Nate. Applause!

[Applause]

**SKRATCH: Has anything changed since you signed to Triple Crown Records?**

OMAR: The only thing that has changed is that our music has been able to get out to more people. We've also had more resources to reach more people with our music, and that's amazing to us. When we started this band, I don't think anybody ever thought that we would get this far, so that's amazing.

NICK: [Glances at guitar player] This is bullshit!

OMAR: There's a Spanish guitar player playing in the background.

NICK: [Speaks with a serious tone] And he is not Spanish! That dude is white!

OMAR: [Yells towards the

guitar player] You ain't Spanish!

OMAR: That's a lie, dude!

It's about being punk rock and staying true to your roots and saying, "I don't care what my parents say. I'm going to do whatever I want."

NATE: I like the song "Science". That's my jam.

OMAR: It's not called "Science", it's called "Make a Run for It". My personal favorite track to play live is a song called "Talk Us Down". It has a lot of energy, and I love playing it live.

**SKRATCH: On a past tour, you had to cancel certain dates because Colin was sick. What exactly happened?**

COLIN: I drove to the hospital. I was feeling really bad. I was just sitting there waiting. I was like, Get me out of here. [Grunts] My temperature was 104, and I had to drive and get my antibiotics that night. I felt the worst that I have ever felt in my entire life. We had to cancel the rest of the dates.

**SKRATCH: What are your plans after this tour?**

brown, but the gray is always better.

OMAR: My parents are originally from Egypt, so I enjoy couscous with some humus and baklava for dessert.

NATE: Mashed potatoes and a lot of butter.

**SKRATCH: If you could cover any holiday song, what would it be?**

OMAR: [Sings] Oh, the weather outside is frightful / But inside it's so delightful / DAVE: Are you serious?

NATE: I like Rudolph.

NICK: You know what's good? Is that MxPx song that goes, "A little goes a long way."

**SKRATCH: Anything else you would like to add?**

OMAR: I would just like to shout out to everybody who knows who we are. Everyone who doesn't know who we are, come check us out and hang out!

For tour dates and more, check out the website: [www.hitthelightsmusic.com](http://www.hitthelightsmusic.com); and pick up **THIS IS A STICK UP & DON'T MAKE IT A MURDER** at your local record store!





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**It Dies Today**  
By Justin Sellout

Fans already familiar with **It Dies Today's** unique recipe of melody and brutality will not be disappointed by the band's newest effort, **SIRENS**, released by Trustkill Records on October 17th. The band continues to deliver the punches on **SIRENS**, evolving and pushing the music to a new level, while keeping their distinct style intact. The band is currently on tour in support of **SIRENS**.

I caught up with vocalist Nick Brooks to talk Greek mythology, the tour, and, of course, the new record.

**SKRATCH: Could you give us a brief history of It Dies Today for those who aren't familiar with the band?**

**SKRATCH: That leads well into the next question: From where do you normally draw lyrical inspiration? Was there something you drew from for this album in particular?**

**NICK:** This album is about what's been going on in my life and all the people in my life and everything—a lot of substance abuse and infidelity stuff. Everything is temptation-based, you know what I mean? Hence the title referring back to temptation.

**SKRATCH: What bands have you looked up to that might have helped shape what the band sounds like?**

**NICK:** I don't even know. [Laughs] For me, anyway, vocally on the record, the way I went about doing my vocals is Pantera/older Metallica/even older Machine Head kind of

# IT DIES TODAY

**NICK:** Yeah, sure. In 2001 we got together. We knew each other from playing in other bands in Buffalo. We went through a bunch of lineup changes, and then a few years ago Mike joined the band and our old guitar player, Steve, moved to bass, and we put out **THE CAITIFF CHOIR**. And just last Tuesday we put out a new record, **SIRENS**.

**SKRATCH: Is there a meaning behind the name "It Dies Today"?**

**NICK:** Basically, we were 16 and needed a name for our first show. There's no real meaning behind it, and we regret naming our band this.

**SKRATCH: Is there a meaning behind the title "SIRENS"?**

**NICK:** It's based on the sirens from Greek mythology. The sirens were these women that would sing from these rocks and lure in mariners to their death, basically, and I just thought that was a good representation of all the lyrics I was writing, because they're all based on temptation and stuff like that.

stuff. It's probably the same type of stuff for Mike, who wrote the record with me.

**SKRATCH: What made you want to be a singer? Was there a pivotal moment?**

**NICK:** There wasn't really any one moment. I've always tried to be in bands, even when I was in grade school and stuff. Then I just kind of got sucked into it pretty much. I started my first band when I was 14 and just kind of ended up being a singer.

**SKRATCH: What's one thing you guys can't go on tour without?**

**NICK:** Um...I have no idea. Pretty much the stuff you can't do without—DVDs and iPods and stuff like that (technology crap).

**SKRATCH: You guys are out touring and are in the thick of the music industry. Do you have any comments on the state of the industry today?**

**NICK:** It's changed a lot, I guess. Metal or heavier music or whatever you want to call it is



kind of getting bigger. But at the same time...I don't know. The whole thing with downloading hurts a lot of bands I guess. I don't really care, personally. The state of music is definitely messed up because of the piracy thing, but I don't care how kids get our record, as long as they're coming to the shows and singing along. Other than that, I think it's in a good place, as far as metal is concerned.

**SKRATCH: How did you guys get in with Trustkill Records?**

NICK: Our friend worked with them, and we gave him our new demo to pass along. We had talked to a few other labels, but we just ended up going with them.

**mind when you started? Did you have a goal when you began writing this record?**

NICK: Not at all, actually. What happened was that I wrote the song off the record called "Sirens" and just kind of thought about all the lyrics I had been writing and that they were all kind of about that, and it all worked out. I kind of accidentally wrote a conceptual album-but it's not really conceptual.

**SKRATCH: How have kids been reacting to the new stuff?**

NICK: We're out with Silverstein and Aiden right now, and it's really a different kind of tour for us to be on. It's been really cool. There's still a bunch of kids who come out to see us, but we definitely get to expose



"...I don't care how kids get our record, as long as they're coming to the shows and singing along."

**SKRATCH: How does the new material compare to the songs off of CAITIFF CHOIR?**

NICK: I'd just say it's a lot smarter. The way we wrote CAITIFF CHOIR was just retarded, and the way we wrote this record is me and Mike just locked ourselves in the studio for, like, six months and cut demos of every instrument and overexamined everything and just really tried to write the best record possible. We're pretty satisfied with it. If we would have had a little more time, that would have been nice, but we're definitely happy with the way it turned out.

**SKRATCH: You said most of the songs are temptation-based. Did you have that in**

ourselves to kids who have never heard us before. The best part about this tour has been kids who come up and tell us that they've never seen us before and that they picked up the CD. That's always cool.

Be sure to pick up It Dies Today's new record, SIRENS, in stores now. To comment on this or any other piece you see in SKRATCH, feel free to e-mail us at [speakup@skratchmagazine.com](mailto:speakup@skratchmagazine.com).



Lower Class Brats  
by Brandon Russell

12 years ago, Lower Class Brats set out to win back the rock scene from the emo and alternative bands that were in the process of taking their beloved Austin by the balls. With little more than a passion for punk rock and a conscious connection with the protagonists and ingenious Nadsat idioms from Anthony Burgess's *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, the following decade would see the release of countless records and tours through countries unknown to most American punk bands. Now, three years after the release of their last full-length album, the Brats are back with their most compelling work to date, *THE NEW SEDITIONARIES*. Their first record with the Southern California label TKO Records, *THE NEW SEDITIONARIES* marks the beginning of the next chapter in the distinguished career of these Texas legends.

I caught up with bassist EVO via e-mail, and he shared his thoughts on the ongoing battle with the Austin music scene, canonical British literature, and the addictions behind this new gem.

**SKRATCH:** You guys just did two Texas record-release shows (in Austin and San Antonio). Enlighten me, a California punk fan. The image of a busload of drug-crazed

punk rockers storming through Bush-Land between gigs seems comparable to, say, a busload of curious Japanese tourists unwittingly dressed in Nazi army fatigues on a photographic tour of the mountains of Southern Lebanon. Volatile. Am I close here?  
**EVO:** [Laughs] Yeah, you are quite accurate [concerning] the idea of chaos surrounding our travels to gigs. The shows themselves are



# LOWER CLASS BRATS

**EVO:** *CLASS OF OUR OWN* came out in late 2003. Then we put out the *WORST* single in May 2004. LCB went through some drummer changes before Clay came in, which was early in 2005. So during that year of the vacuum, we fought to keep the spirit going. Leaving Punkcore and searching for a new home was happening during that time, as well, so things were not perfect. Finally we got some cohesiveness with TKO and began to write songs. During 2005, we recorded a demo of new tracks, which are featured on the new record. We toured and released two other singles, *I'M A MESS* and the *TWO IN THE HEART* split before fine-tuning our newest release. So there it is.

**SKRATCH:** On to the new record. Various addictions have fueled previous recordings: the addiction to Orl, for one. What kinds of addictions were behind the new record?

**EVO:** Broken relationships, traveling to new areas of the world, and living in a frustrated society were some aesthetics of this new record. Of course, having fun, laughing with friends, and playing punk rock tie it all together, as well.

**SKRATCH:** The title track on the new record pays tribute to the punks, dykes, prostitutes, and soldiers. We all know dykes and prostitutes are great. Most of us like the punks, as well. But who are these soldiers of whom you speak?

**EVO:** The soldiers of the modern age are the kids participating in the scene. They are the ones who fight for their own individuality.

**SKRATCH:** "Lip Music", the instrumental with pianos on *NEW SEDITIONARIES*, is a nice touch. Have you guys been fitting it into the live show?

**EVO:** We have not played it live & yet. The song took shape, but it came into its own without lyrics. I guess that kind of thing happens sometimes.

**SKRATCH:** What's the story behind doing the instrumental with a piano?

**EVO:** The song seemed to take on characteristics of a pub-rock anthem, so bringing in that extra layer was something that seemed natural.

**SKRATCH:** For years you have written lyrics in Anthony Burgess's Slavic-Cockney hybrid dialect that he developed for *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*. The

simply a reflection of our lives—the chaos and stress, frustration and anger, pleasure and pain. It's all in the name of rock 'n' roll!

**SKRATCH:** You guys started out more than 10 years ago to destroy the college, emo, and garage bands that had "somehow taken over our city." SXSW (South by South West) has become a staple on the Austin music scene—likely more so than any other local music festival. It seems to me to embody all the things you set out to destroy. Are Lower Class Brats losing the war, or just the battle at hand?

**EVO:** There really is no way we, as a punk band, can stop something as big as SXSW. It's an impossible task, so we don't care.

**SKRATCH:** Whenever underground rock of any genre and Austin are mentioned in the same breath, Emo's invariably comes up. Is Emo's essentially the meeting point for rock bands either locally or on national tours?

**EVO:** Emo's is quite the popular club for established and aspiring bands to play. A lot of people know of Emo's, so it has just been elevated over the years as the epitome of the South Texas punk venue.

**SKRATCH:** It's been three years since Lower Class Brats have put out anything substantial. Why the hiatus?

dialogue in the book has been criticized for being inaccessible, while others label it a work of genius. Obviously, you guys fall into the latter school of thought. How and when did a taste for *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE* develop?

**EVO:** High school. It was required reading for some, and for others the book and movie was simply an extension of what we all feel sometimes: alienated, but compelled to thrust our beliefs on others. Doing it our own way is the only way we know how.

**SKRATCH:** You guys have toured the world and been to some obscure countries, as far as punk rock touring goes, like Mexico. Any good stories from countries where most people would never expect to see an American punk band?

**EVO:** We went to Slovenia earlier this year and played at a former Yugoslavian prison. Those crazy fuckers, they really liked the energy. We went to Paris a couple of times, and both times we played in a boat on the Seine. Ever heard of Basque Country? Well, we went there, and it was amazing. It is in the European Union, but it had a totally different vibe to it than anywhere else. The people and the bands were really great. I can't remember anything else, though.

**SKRATCH:** Anything else to say on Lower Class Brats' behalf?

**EVO:** Buy the fucking record.

*THE NEW SEDITIONARIES* was released September 5 and is available in record stores around the country and online at [www.interpunk.com](http://www.interpunk.com). Tour dates, mp3s, photos, and general information about the band is best found at TKO Records' Website, [www.tkorecords.com](http://www.tkorecords.com).

**"DOING IT OUR OWN WAY IS THE ONLY WAY WE KNOW HOW."**







# RX

# BANDITS

## RX Bandits

by Joe Licavoli

When many of the ska bands of the '90s called it quits years ago, Southern California's RX Bandits are still going strong. With its new independent release **AND THE BATTLE BEGUN &**, RX Bandits are in a new phase and are leaving record labels behind.

Vocalist/guitar player Matt Embree took some time to answer some of my questions through e-mail regarding releasing the new album independently, politics, and music in general.

**SKRATCH: What made you decide to release the new album independently?**

EMBREE: The thought of releasing the record ourselves was really appealing to us. I had started a label called Mash Down Babylon in 2003 to document the artistic and musical expression of the collective M.D.B., who are essentially a small community of friends who make music, paintings, poetry, etc. The whole thing is run by members of the collective out of my mom's garage, which is in essence our studio, office, and mail-order room all in one. We put out a few smaller records from bands like Seekret Socyete, 2 Drunk'n Poets, and The Return; co-released the first EP by The Sound of Animals Fighting; and then landed an international distribution deal through LumberJack-Mordam for the RX Bandits live DVD. When it came time to go independent, it just seemed natural to release the record on M.D.B., being that all these channels had already been accessed and were already available. It feels great to be completely responsible for your own creation, to know where all the money is going, how it is being marketed, to have eliminated the middle man. Now no matter what happens, it's all in the hands of those who made the music; there is no one to blame but ourselves. It is a very intimidating yet empowering situation to be in.

**SKRATCH: What was the songwriting process with the album?**

EMBREE: Basically, we just got in a room and jammed a lot. We took parts that we liked, hashed them out, and kind of stuck them together. There were songs that came in almost complete having being written predominantly by one of the members, as well as tunes that we all collectively had a piece in composing. We try to keep everything as natural as possible, in that we don't force songs into normal melodic structures.

**SKRATCH: The song "In Her Drawer" is a really powerful song lyrically and musically. Did you write the song and then create the music, or was it done simultaneously?**

EMBREE: The lyrics and music to that song were written more or less simultaneously, though a solid chunk of the lyrical content came later. The chorus was a freestyle about a woman and a situation I had just undergone and ended up being the permanent wording. Originally the music to that tune was part one of a 17-minute song that was the first thing we wrote for the new record. We later broke it up to three tunes and threw some of the extraneous parts away.

**SKRATCH: The songs on **AND THE BATTLE BEGUN &** seem to have kind of a mixture of the trademark RX Bandits sound, but they also have hints of psychedelic rock and hardcore. Was that something you guys were going for with**

**two albums had an effect on the election?**

EMBREE: It felt good to have one of our most outspoken tracks on a compilation that was distributed well so that a lot of people would be able to hear it. That song "Overcome (Recapitulation)" deals more with the present social climate and the status quo, what is perceived to be right or wrong by the majority of the population, etc. The political structure of the United States is inherently flawed and bound to fail. I think the last election, the futility of the recent protests, and the continued unjustified military presence in numerous countries are an accurate portrayal of what democracy means in the U.S.A.

**SKRATCH: Have you encountered any criticism at live shows about the politically-charged RX Bandits songs?**

EMBREE: Not really. Most people at shows with an opinion about something I have said in lyrics will come and talk to me about it. I encourage people to do it. I'm not some untouchable rock star figure, and I mean what I say and love the interaction. Most folks say something positive and appreciate that a band they dig aren't afraid to say how they feel about otherwise touchy or controversial subjects. I've had a great deal of awesome conversations with people. Sometimes we do book trades or give each other recommendations to documentaries and stuff. Totally randomly I have met a small amount of kids at shows who want to convert me to Christianity or whatever. Those conversations are some of the most fun. I have gathered that I am going to hell for singing about love and peace and other pretty cool stuff. Maybe Satan is a hippie.

**SKRATCH: Has it been tough with booking shows and promoting the new album?**

EMBREE: Nope. People who are into RX Bandits seem to be some of the most dedicated fans of a band I have ever seen. I believe it is because we have been around for a while and anyone who has ever heard of us never got into our music from the mainstream media.

## "WE ARE PLAYING MUSIC BECAUSE WE LOVE MUSIC"

**the new songs?**

EMBREE: We don't actually ever go for any particular sound. We do silly stuff like focus on shape, color, and texture. A lot of the time someone in the band will have an idea for a tune and describe it visually, and we all try to recreate that image aurally.

**SKRATCH: How did it feel to have a song on the first **ROCK AGAINST BUSH CD?** Even though Bush was reelected, do you think the**

We aren't on commercial radio and don't have videos on commercial television. Word of mouth is tremendously important to us, and because of it we have some of the most rad fans there are. I think they understand that we are playing music because we love music and that passion is communicated through the songs and shared by band and audience.

Be sure to check out RX Bandits' new album, **AND THE BATTLE BEGUN &**. For more information, check out [www.rxbandits.com](http://www.rxbandits.com). To





# STREET DOGS

## Street Dogs

by William David Jones & Kevin Haverly

In 1996, Mike McColgan was a founding member of and singer for a little Boston band called Dropkick Murphys. Just a couple years later they were signed to Hellcat Records and released their full-length debut, *DO OR DIE*. Shortly thereafter, McColgan decided to pursue his dream of becoming a firefighter and quit the band.

But his music career was far from over. In 2002, music called McColgan back to work. Enter Street Dogs, in which McColgan held tight to Boston working-class themes in the band's aptly titled debut, *SAVIN HILL*. The success of the album and their "tear the roof down" live sets scored them a tour with Flogging Molly. The release of their follow-up, *BACK TO THE WORLD*, gained even more attention for the band and a whole new slew of opportunities, including their first headlining tour. But if the first two releases had the band knocking on the door of success, then *FADING AMERICAN DREAM* is going to be the one that just breaks it down. "We do what we want, when we want, how we want," says McColgan. With three incredible albums now under their belt and live shows that highlight the great songs with pure energy, it doesn't look like anyone can stop Streets Dogs.

**SKRATCH:** How's the Gold Tour going so far?

**MIKE:** It's been amazing. The bands that are on the tour, like The World/Inferno Friendship Society, Whole Wheat Bread, The Bouncing Souls...It's a dream come true for Street Dogs to be on such a good bill.

**SKRATCH:** The Boston music scene has always appeared to be very close. Being that you're a part of it, why do you think that is?

**MIKE:** There's a big fraternity amongst the bands in the Boston music scene. It goes back to the early days when The Mighty Mighty Bosstones started. They took care of other Boston bands. They pretty much set the benchmark for "Boston bands look out for Boston bands." That's just gone on for a long time in the scene and in the genre.

**SKRATCH:** Starting your own label, Brass Tacks Records, and signing Scotch Greens-how'd it all



come about?

**MIKE:** We were on tour, and a buddy of ours told us we had to check out Scotch Greens. I checked them out, and I was fuckin' floored at how good they were. We got them on the Warped Tour this summer, and they've been doing relatively well. With Street Dogs and Brass Tacks, we're going to put out what we want and do things on our own terms. We do what we want, when we want, how we want. That's the good thing about DRT. We're like, "If we're going to sign here, we're going to have our own imprint, and we're going to stay doing the punk rock thing, because that's what we do." It's worked out well.

**"We made an exceptional record.  
(I try to say that as humbly as I can.)"**

**SKRATCH:** For *FADING AMERICAN DREAM*, what was it like working with producer Ted Hutt?

**MIKE:** Ted Hutt is just another caliber in talent. He forced everyone in the band to turn around and push and push and give the best possible performance they could. He never wavered. He never got tired. He never got disinterested. From noon, 'til 4 or 5 in the morning every day for about a month he was on us. And I think the 13 songs that came out of that will stand the test of time. We made an exceptional record. (I try to say that as humbly as I can.)

**SKRATCH:** Concerning the title of the album, how do you see the *FADING AMERICAN DREAM* of the current American working man?

**MIKE:** A lot of people don't know this, but almost up until the last minute we were going to make the record self-titled. On the title track, "Fading American Dream", we were looking for a chorus. I saw something on the news about young working-class

families in their early

20s struggling and

not having the same shot at the

American dream that their parents had and this being the first generation to do worse than their parents, [what with] the high cost of housing, and the huge gap between the rich and the poor, and the shrinking of the middle class. It used to be the American dream, and now it's the elusive, fading American dream. It's not that attainable, like it once was. We infused that into that song. That track took off and became the title track of the album. We felt that best represented where we were at. That title, that song-that's representative of the album as a whole.

**SKRATCH:** In the brief time that it's been out, how have fans received the new album, and how do you feel about it?

**MIKE:** I feel if you took all the influences of the band members, the collective pedigree, and you slammed it into the center, what walked out of that would be the new record. It fires on all cylinders, and it shows different looks, [such as] hardcore songs, anthemic songs, rock songs, folk songs. The general consensus has been overwhelmingly positive. We're kind of taken aback. In this genre of music, people can be hypercritical, really scrutinize things, be over-analytical, super opinionated. We figured it'd be half "hurrah" and half firing squad, but so far it's been strong.

**SKRATCH:** Originally you left Dropkick Murphys to become a firefighter. Now that music has called you back and Dropkick has become quite successful, do you regret this decision at all?

**MIKE:** It's funny, because I remember

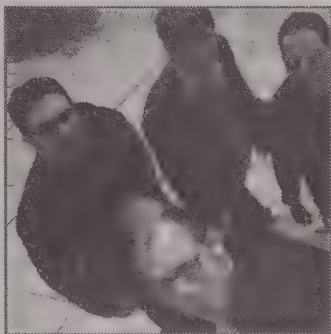
agonizing over the decision to leave a month before I told the guys I was going to go, and in my heart and soul, body and mind, I felt it was the right choice to go because I wanted to get involved in the fire service. I made the decision, and I never looked back professionally, and they never did, either. They brought forth a phenomenal frontman in Al Barr. They've gone on to huge success that they deserve. I've never really regretted the decision. It's the strangest thing, too, because I definitely do have regrets in my life. I haven't done everything right, and I'm not a saint, but with that decision, I never regretted it. I've always rooted for those guys as it's evolved and gone on, and I'm so glad for their success. I'm also glad that there's room enough for all the bands out here in this genre, and they've been very welcoming to us. Kids will try to stir stuff up just for dirt's sake. Unfortunately, I've got no dirt to report. [Smiles]

**SKRATCH:** You were raised Catholic and served in the Gulf War. How do you feel that has shaped your perspective of today's wars and religious issues?

**MIKE:** As years went on [when] removed from those two institutions, I grew more liberal in my ways of thinking. I had more clarity and open-mindedness and understanding on issues. When I decided to be a singer, it was a growth process. As time goes by [when you're] in a band, you tour the world, and your eyes open up. You see a lot and you become more understanding. You inherently believe in inclusion and acceptance. That's how I feel today. If you really read into *FADING AMERICAN DREAM*, you're going to hear that growth and open-mindedness and willingness to always be teachable about things.

*FADING AMERICAN DREAM* is out now on Brass Tacks Records. The band will continue its supporting slot on the Gold Tour through mid December. They will then tour overseas before hopefully coming back for a U.S. headlining tour starting sometime around February. To comment on this or any other piece you see in *SKRATCH*, feel free to e-mail us at [speakup@skratchmagazine.com](mailto:speakup@skratchmagazine.com).





## Goodbye Valentine

by Brian Spiegel

After a day filled with van problems, gear problems, money problems, more van problems, and a diet consisting of nothing but beer and peanut-butter sandwiches, keeping a sense of humor about the life you chose is a pretty good idea. As both their bio and their e-mail liaisons recommend, Goodbye Valentine understand this. Without a sunny perspective, the constant barrage of stress and financial woes involved in making a living in the indie-rock scene can quickly turn a man as angry and bitter as a date with Nancy Grace.

A traditional four-piece from the tiny outpost of Los Angeles, Goodbye Valentine are currently peddling their eight-song S/T EP, an infectious blend of bass-heavy "not quite pop/rock, not quite punk rock"

that brings to mind such reliable bands as Maxeen and Jimmy Eat World. This means countless hours on the road balancing the joys of bringing fans "the rock" with dealing with the traditional indie-rock van problems. "For starters, our van has no class, no style, and no sense of direction," says drummer Jeff, "but we love it to death. [It's] actually out of commission and we have been having to driving separately to shows, which sucks ass."

Whether driving alone or caravanning together, the band has posted a fairly successful run in 2006. After spending part of their summer vacation on the Warped Tour, Goodbye Valentine recently played the inaugural Bamboozle Left festival in Pomona, CA. "The most important thing we learned from

Warped [and Bamboozle] was how to manage our time and get organized," says bassist Gideon. "Playing in a band is much more than playing shows and having practice, and these events really force you [not only] to learn how to manage your time, but also how to deal with being out on the road."

Currently mulling over a future which may include a debut full-length with production from Bill Stevenson of The Descendents, Goodbye Valentine are keeping their options open while working hard and always keeping their sense of humor firmly intact. "Selling out" is a misused term of our generation. Everybody thinks signing a contract is like making a deal with the devil," Gideon states. "There are good deals and bad



## Dead City Shakers

by Brian Spiegel

Like the "horror" label in the movie industry, the word "psychobilly" is an often misunderstood phrase in the music world. In Hollywood, attaching the word "horror" to the description of a certain project usually brings to mind a one-note, soulless piece of work where more emphasis is put on shocking an audience than into any type of artistic endeavor. The same can be said for the "psychobilly" label in music: a twangy, soulless piece of work that relies more on speed and two-bit lyrics than anything emotional.

But in the same way that "horror" is misunderstood in movies, "psychobilly" is misunderstood in music. As horror can have substance, meaning, and (above all) emotion, so can psychobilly. In fact psychobilly is, in part, based on old-school country—a style never noted for lacking emotion or deep symbolism.

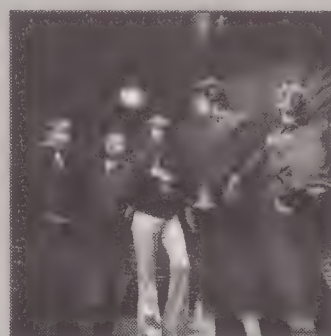
Ask any true psychobilly band (Tiger Army or The Reverend Horton Heat, for example), and they will usually cite Johnny Cash or Chet Atkins before they call out praise to The Misfits.

Dead City Shakers, a psychobilly band from Dallas, would probably be one of the first to raise a shot of Jack Daniels to the late, great Man in Black. Full of distorted country guitar licks, and rumbling stand-up bass, DCS are more "souful" than "soulless," "melodic" than "psycho," and "country" than "hardcore."

DCS formed in the summer of 2003 when former bandmates Matt Stewart (upright bass) and Clint Jerome (drums) decided to begin playing music together, with surf/rock guitarist Kennan Forte joining them to create a "surf/psychobilly" instrumental group. In 2005 the threesome was joined by

Gabe Cancino on rhythm guitar, and soon after, following a drunken night of improvising lyrics to the group's instrumentals, Tim Breyfogle joined the mix on vocals. Kennan left the band shortly after, and the group settled into being a four-piece, with each member bringing his own special twist on the band's sound.

Since the band's lineup was solidified, DCS has spent many a cold night on the road criss-crossing the greater Texas area opening gigs for such bands as The Briggs, 12 Step Rebels, Conombre Zombi, Flametrick Subs, and Brutally Frank. In late 2005, the band signed with Zero Youth Records and released their debut album, *SHIP OF BEGGARS*, an album full of psychobilly ditties that combine the twangy rhythms and upright bass of good ol' country with a punkish underbelly that goes together



## We Are the Fury

by Denise Blaz

[www.purevolume.com/wearethefury](http://www.purevolume.com/wearethefury)  
[www.eastwestrock.com](http://www.eastwestrock.com)

Their first release as a band was this past January, and the five members of We Are the Fury and their fans now eagerly await the release of the band's new record. After a series of push-backs to the CD, including the album artwork not being turned in on time and delays in mastering, the new disc is finally due to hit the stores on January 23rd. *VENUS* will be the band's first full-length release, following up the EP *INFINITE JEST*. "The EP was more glam rock, but [this record] is more rock 'n' roll," says lead singer Jeremy Lublin. Being cooped up in their van during the hot days of June and July, the band endured the Warped Tour this past summer by eating "crabtastic sandwiches," their own concoction of imitation crab

meat, barbeque sauce, and relish between two slices of bread. Playing the Ernie Ball stage, eating mediocre food, and surviving their first Warped Tour, the band seems like they're quite the road warriors. They are currently set to play a December tour but will first stop in to play some shows at the annual CMJ Music Festival in New York City.

To hear a stream of their new song "Now You Know", head on over to their Purevolume account at [www.purevolume.com/wearethefury](http://www.purevolume.com/wearethefury). More information on the band, including their December tour dates, can be found on their label East West Rock's Website, [www.eastwestrock.com](http://www.eastwestrock.com).



# BAND PROFILES





## All In

by Chip Midnight

[www.myspace.com/allinhx](http://www.myspace.com/allinhx)

The South breeds hardcore bands the way West Virginia breeds unwed teenage mothers: they're everywhere. **EVERYWHERE.** Swing a dead cat over your head by the tail, let it fly, and you're bound to knock down a tattooed, baseball-hat-wearing hardcore punk who is in a band that plays VFW halls and basement shows throughout the Deep South.

Birmingham's All In was formed by five friends who share a love of straight-forward hardcore rock bands like Figure Four, Terror, and No Innocent Victim; and whose goal is to create music that inspires crowd participation in the form of slam-dancing and stage-diving. To that end, All In has released its debut CD, **NOTHING TO LOSE**, on Florida-based label Hand of Hope.

Throughout the 13 tracks, the testosterone-driven band lays down pummeling riff after pummeling riff—some sludgy, some sharper than a knife, all with intense ferocity. Scott Hodnett barks his way through a majority of the songs, sounding like the Cookie Monster as he spits out lyrics like "Hope dies last / But we never will / Hearts still beating / We're still pushing forward" ("Richard's Crooshy"). On tracks like "Babar: the Bill Cosby of Elephants" (what is with the silly song titles on this CD?), somebody contributes vocals that sound like Mike Muir of Suicidal Tendencies. It could be Hodnett simply giving his vocal chords a rest; it could be guitarist Brooks Etheredge, who provides backing vocals throughout **NOTHING TO LOSE**. The liner notes don't make it clear.

Ultimately, All In isn't trying to turn the hardcore world on its ear; they're simply trying to give the kids an outlet for their energy, whether it be inspiring kids to slam into each other like dirty hockey players in a playoff game or screaming in unison at the top of their lungs to the angry words that Hodnett has written.

Sample All In's abrasive hardcore music and check for tour dates at [www.myspace.com/allinhx](http://www.myspace.com/allinhx).



## Our Corpse Destroyed

by Janelle Jones

[www.ocdestroyed.com](http://www.ocdestroyed.com)

Christian hardcore punk bands inevitably have their naysayers, those who believe one can't mix the intense religious beliefs with a genre that, for at least quite a few of its early heroes (Richard Hell, Johnny 'Nunders, The Sex Pistols, etc.) was birthed from an attitude based in nihilism, rebellion, chaos, and self-destruction. As The Vandals sang, "It's a fact." And while Christianity has become somewhat more accepted in the hardcore scene (i.e., "new" hardcore, as opposed to the Minor Threat/Black Flag era), it's not seen all that much in punk. But San Antonio's Our Corpse Destroyed, a five-piece with a fierce old-school hardcore punk sound that could be likened to the now-defunct Punk Core act The Havoc (before they went more in a rock direction), would like to become a major contender in the punk world—not just in the Christian realm,

but joining secular Texas hardcore-punk heavy-hitters Damage Case, Complete Control, and Krum Burns. "What we really wanna do," attests guitarist Eddie, "is write music that the kids cannot deny, like, 'Those guys are Christians, but their music is so good.'"

The band should be on their way to achieving that end with their second album, the relentless **AVENGE YOUR CITY** (Paloma Sound). Still, for this band that have their own church (Rise Above Ministries), their primary purpose of being is to spread their main message, which is, according to Eddie, "the Gospel. That's what we want kids to know: there's a God out there That loves them. He did everything in His power to have a relationship with us so we wouldn't have to spend eternity in hell." And that's not all. OCD also want to show

kids there's "something else out there to choose from instead of just getting drunk and partying it up," because the band have seen WAY too many friends destroy their lives through drugs and that lifestyle. "I wanna see the best for [the kids]. If that pisses people off, oh, well, I don't worry about them. [...] We're gonna do what we believe we were called to do."

Eddie says the band and their congregation are at the moment "seeing God do some miraculous stuff," such as healing people (including guitarist/pastor Skip). "That's what we wanna see happen at shows, honestly," he says. "We can't argue God to anarcho-punks; it's not gonna happen. What we wanna see is a demonstration of His power to show up. I think we're on that road, so that's what we're looking forward to."



## The Transit War

by Chip Midnight

[myspace.com/thetransitwar](http://myspace.com/thetransitwar)

"This year has been a total highlight for the band," says Jim Hughes, lead singer for San Diego four-piece The Transit War. The band's **AH DISCORDIA**, released in 2005 by Harbor Records, was re-released in January by Orange Peel Records with bonus video footage. In February, The Transit War hit the studio to start recording the follow-up, **MISS YOUR FACE**, which was released in October. "Spending a month in Austin recording the record was definitely a highlight," says Hughes. "It just keeps getting better. 2006 has been a very productive year for The Transit War."

Despite spending a good portion of the year in the studio, The Transit War found time to do plenty of touring, playing shows with the likes of Quietdrive and Self Against City. If there is a band out on the road today

that knows their way around the U.S., it's The Transit War. When it came time to write lyrics for **MISS YOUR FACE**, the band couldn't help but be influenced by their road travels. "I think we all take the majority of our writing inspiration from our time spent on the road," Hughes says, "the people we meet, the places that we experience. We try to write about what we know, and these days we know the road."

**MISS YOUR FACE** is chock full of catchy, anthemic pop-punk numbers similar to material by Hot Rod Circuit and Northstar that are tailor-made for the car stereo on a sunny day with miles of open road ahead. The steady beat laid down by the rhythm section (bassist Mike Frey and drummer Brad Bohensky) is one you can tap along to on the steering wheel, while the multi-tracked melodies

will keep you singing along throughout.

As is the case with most bands on the touring circuit, The Transit War has been able to use sites like MySpace and PureVolume to market their music. "I think the Internet plays a huge part in our ability to keep our fans up to date with what the band is doing and the tours we're on," Hughes says. "It's definitely increased awareness."

From mid October to mid November, The Transit War served as special guests on the Lostprophets tour, and additional tours are in the works for the end of 2006 and 2007. "It's pretty tough," says Hughes about the sometimes lonely job of touring. "But I have honestly never thought to myself that I wished I had a 9-to-5 job. I think I can speak for everyone in the band when I say that we all



**BAND PROFILES**



# LIVE REVIEWS

## CURSIVE THE THERMALS LADYFINGER

September 29, 2006 @ Starlight  
Ballroom (Philadelphia, PA)

By Erika Owens

When Cursive are on, they are on. They tour incessantly and release the sort of benchmark albums that people anchor memories with. When they are off, on hiatus, they recharge and return with a sound that satisfies fans and reaches out to new listeners. Now, Cursive are on tour and back with a new album, **HAPPY HOLLOW**, that has a more adult (read: toned-down) sound—which, oddly, did not result in an older crowd. All those fans who pulled many an all-nighter with the help of **DOMESTICA** were missing, as was the Japanese indie band that typically opens a Cursive show. This time around, the opening slot went to Saddle Creek labelmates Ladyfinger. Ladyfinger wanted to sound like early Cave In, but they did not have the stamina necessary to rouse anyone (except one really excited fan). Their songs were formulaic, with simple drum beats that never quite matched the action on the guitars. This disarray, coupled with a singer who was not confident enough to scream or talented enough to sing, made for an extremely tedious 45-minute set.

But then, oh, The Thermals were up. I'm ashamed to admit that this was the first time I'd so much as heard of The Thermals...and what a wonderful surprise. After such a wimpy opening act, The Thermals were a joy, with their energized, focused, just plain fun set. They transported me back to the '90s, when the Warped Tour was the highlight of my year. I haven't been taken by an unknown-to-me band like that in years. Impressively, there were a few smart, intelligible songs that I could sing along to without even knowing the words. As the set progressed, The Thermals played more of their new, starkly political material from **THE BODY, THE BLOOD, THE MACHINE**. The anti-Bush, anti-evangelist

message was expertly put forth in songs like "Here's Your Future" and "A Pillar of Salt". The same earnestness that makes The Thermal's woe-is-love songs so potent allow them to overcome the overblown lyrics and poorly-thought-out stances that typically plague political punk. Love, politics, punk, and fun—The Thermals know what makes for an enjoyable show; and the crowd sang, clapped, and pumped their arms in approval.

The crowd was now primed for the main act, and Cursive answered with a wall of sound. My favorite part of Cursive is Tim Kasher's scream—and boy, did the new incarnation of Cursive bellow from that stage. Eight band members—including a brass section—filled out the **HAPPY HOLLOW** sound and filled in Greta's void. At first I was put off by the aggressiveness of such a full stage. Kasher's screaming and whispering always seemed more intimate than a sports-team-sized band; but I was soon so enveloped in the set that I forgot this quibble. Plus, the set list represented far more than just **HAPPY HOLLOW**. Songs off **DOMESTICA** actually got a hearty crowd response, though **UGLY ORGAN** is the obvious favorite. But **HAPPY HOLLOW** was not to be forgotten, as Kasher noted that Philly's show was the first night they really pulled it off. And this fact was clear throughout the rest of the set, as "Big Bang" and "Rise Up! Rise Up!" were far more animated live than on the CD. Kasher explained that, "I will use my mouth and my fingers and these people will use their extremities to play songs similar to those you have heard before—or maybe never heard"; and the songs were similar, yet more magnetic. This magnetism held to the end, when "Art Is Hard" (from **DOMESTICA**) and "Sink to the Beat" (from **BURST AND BLOOM**) were played in the encore. Closing with "Sink to the Beat" was an incredible caper to an eclectic set. It's off my favorite album, and it left many of us fans with huge smiles. Cursive is back, and they are not just playing **HAPPY HOLLOW**. You must go see them as they tour throughout the fall with Eastern Youth (hey, Japanese music is back!), Jeremy Enigk, and others.

C h e c k  
www.cursivearmy.com/03/home2.html for dates. To comment on this or any other piece you see in **SKRATCH**, feel free to e-mail us at [speakup@skratchmagazine.com](mailto:speakup@skratchmagazine.com).

## THE BOUNCING SOULS STREET DOGS WHOLE WHEAT BREAD THE WORLD/INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

October 20, 2006 @ Metro

(Chicago, IL)

Text & Photos by  
William David Jones

The big summer punk tours were packed full of solid lineups, and as the Gold Tour sets out, it appears this fall is going to be no different. The tour's name is derived from **THE GOLD RECORD**, released earlier this year by New Jersey punk-rock staples The Bouncing Souls. If they weren't quite enough to pique the interest of the masses, the supporting lineup was sure to pack 'em in. Between Boston's Street Dogs (led by the original Dropkick Murphys singer Mike McColligan), Jacksonville's all-black pop-punkers, Whole Wheat Bread, and Brooklyn's cabaret circus-punk act The World/Inferno Friendship Society, the lineup guaranteed a high output of kick-assery. And it delivered.

The World/Inferno Friendship Society opened the night with a short, 25-minute set. They only had with them six of the many members often credited on their albums, but with the charismatic stage presence of frontman Jack Terricloth, a wild woman in a Leftover Crack tank top banging away on a number of percussive instruments along with the drummer, a saxophone, and the traditional guitar and bass, there was more than enough going on to keep fans happy. Terricloth made frequent visits to the barrier to let a large group of fans sing along with many of the songs. The whole crowd then became part of the sing-along, as the band closed with "Only Anarchists Are Pretty" from their latest release, **RED-EYED SOUL**, (on The Bouncing Souls' label, Chunksaah Records).



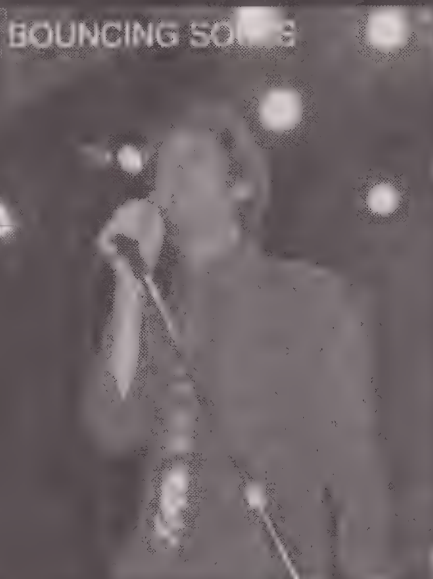
"When I say 'whole wheat, you say 'bread.' Whole wheat!" "Bread!" "Whole wheat!" "Bread!" It's gimmicky, sure, but so is most of the band's shtick of being all-black, dirty, Southern, pop-punk, with a Confederate flag on the drum set, "I Love Black People" T-shirts, and an album called **MINORITY RULES**. However, once you get past the gimmick and realizes the true talent of the band (most of the veterans they tour with call them the most hard-working band out on the road right now), you realize that Whole Wheat Bread is much more than a joke. The gimmick gets your attention and pulls you in, but their performance backs it up. They play a catchy, Blink 182-style of pop-punk and have proven themselves a great band for warming up the crowd. It was unfortunate that I missed the later part of their set, as I came back to hear people talking about the "really good" cover they played of Rancid's "Maxwell Murder".

While it sounds cliché, there is no better way to describe the set that followed than by saying Streets Dogs tore the roof off Metro! Just days before the release of their third full-length, **FADING AMERICAN DREAM**, they were the last band to take the stage in Chicago before the headliners. And while The Bouncing Souls followed with a great set, even THEY couldn't compare to the pure energy Street Dogs brought to the Windy City. Mike McColgan's chin-to-the-chest singing stance gave him the appearance of AC/DC's Brian Johnson—which feels like the perfect comparison, due to the intensity of their set. The fact of the matter was that McColgan was rarely stationary, giving security a workout, as he often jumped down to the barrier up to three times during each song, as well as running back and forth to include every last person in the show. If everyone up front wasn't singing along, they were all pumping their fists and clapping their hands. Only a few feet behind this, a constant pit saw moshing during the fast songs, and a collective sway during sing-alongs like "Tobe's Got a Drinking Problem" (from the newest

release on Brass Tacks Records). They brought Aaron from Whole Wheat Bread back out to sing a bit and even included a track from **DO OR DIE**, "Get Up". Without any gimmicks to speak of, Street Dogs may damn well be the best live band in today's music scene.

As always, the crowd brought out the headliners to the chant of "Olé," but the song wasn't included in their set. The Bouncing Souls brought a good set, and it even looked as though they tried bumping up the intensity after Street Dogs had everyone riled up. The music was played well, and in a crowd full of Souls fans, most everyone was having a good time. Still, the laid-back swagger of vocalist Greg Attonito almost felt boring after the preceding set. Having seen The Bouncing Souls before, I didn't expect anything more, but with the images of McColgan stage-diving just minutes before, Attonito's standing in place during some of the Souls' faster tunes just didn't feel right. Still, it was a solid set, which included seven songs from their newest release, **THE GOLD RECORD**. At least a few songs from every album were represented (with the exception of their full-length debut, **THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE ARGYLE**).

The story of this show? The Bouncing Souls set was solid, but Street Dogs stole the evening



## STREET DOGS



## THE REVELENS THE VIBRATORS

October 1, 2006 @ Red and Black Bar (Washington, DC)  
By Jillian Abbene

When I bought the tickets to The Vibrators' show, I envisioned wall-to-wall, bustling fans—old-schoolers, new-schoolers...hell, even scenesters—transcending age parameters for a night of timeless punk rock. This was not the case. With only a handful of people at the bar, I did my usual "once around" and checked out the new venue layout. Comfortably seated, Knox, Pete, and Eddie sat chilling out with some of the members of The Revelens. I was a little jumpy (in secret glee) and briefly joined them, with Diet Coke in hand and "Sulfate" still whirling prevalently in my head from the drive there. While The Revelens' lead vocalist strained in their set with "technical difficulties," intuition told me that this might bode ill for The Vibrators, as well. I was right. With their present lineup of Knox, Pete, and Eddie, The Vibrators immediately planted themselves and ripped into, "Petrol", then "Kid". And then, like someone letting air out of a balloon, Knox's mic went dead. Everything came to a halt. Pete justifiably acted out in feisty annoyance, with hands waving and pleading for sound assistance. But nothing was ruffling Knox's feathers. "Rip City"



scratchy guitar bites that made the two-hour drive worth it. A marathon of sound blurted through the speakers in the form of "Slave". As Pete beckoned the crowd to push closer, Knox shouted for the onlookers to get off their arses from the bench. Volcanic chords spurted from Knox's guitar. "Automatic Lover" jumped to "Sheena Is a Punk Rocker". Finally, miraculously, the crowd got IT, and the cover of The Clash's "Riot" was perfectly timed. Just then, a baby-faced punk led some wide-floor slamming, which encouraged the rest of the crowd to zealously snatch Pete's mic and finish the chorus. After my shouted request of the catchy "Whips and Furs", "London Girls," and "Yeah Yeah Yeah", the infamous "Baby Baby" was introduced and morphed into a low-key anthem of a drinking song. When the set was over, I still wished they'd play more. I never tire of them. However, the band was satisfied, and as Pete so eloquently stated, "You have to sweat to show what you accomplish"—and yes, they were drenched.

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## THE BRIGGS BLOOD OR WHISKEY

October 31, 2006 @ Hairy Mary's  
(Des Moines, IA)

Text by William David Jones

"It's funny. Today it's Halloween, and no one is dressed up in costumes," Jason LaRocca, guitarist/vocalist for The Briggs, explained. "People have been dressed up for the last four shows." While only a few hiding in the back were dressed in what would traditionally be called a Halloween costume, it may have looked otherwise to a passerby outside of Hairy Mary's. The street punks were out in force, complete with leather, metal studs, mohawks, lots of denim, and plenty of black. It was one of the bigger crowds that Hairy Mary's has had (compare with the one person showing for No Trigger and a total of two (my girlfriend and myself) for The Swellers).

The lineup was one short, as Time Again dropped off the tour just a few shows early to start a tour with Against All Authority. That left only Blood or Whiskey and The Briggs, with no locals filling out the bill. Still, it was just enough for a couple of kick-ass hours of punk.

Blood or Whiskey was imported straight from Kildare, Ireland, for this tour, so it was truly a treat to get to see this great band here. In the tradition of a number of great bands, they have infused traditional Irish sounds with those of punk rock. They get compared to The Progues more than they do to anyone else, and that seems as good of a comparison as any. They took the stage like a bunch of Irishmen just waking up from a hangover, grumbling random things at each other and looking for cigarettes, while tinkering with tunings and soundchecks. Eventually, they all walked to the back of the stage, faced the drummer, turned on the first chords of the opening song, and were off with an energy I never would have expected from the guys I was watching trudge around the stage just seconds before. The crowd was caught a bit off guard, too, but quickly rushed to the small barricade and got into the music. Guitarist/vocalist Dugs quickly moved the mic stand up to the front platform to get closer to the crowd. Pete (banjo) and Sean (accordion) worked behind the frontlines, rocking back and forth with each other to the music. A couple of songs into the set, Dugs told the crowd there was no way they could not dance to this next song. The band then broke into a sound closer to a traditional Irish jig, and the smoke cloud began to make way for a majority of the crowd dancing all over the floor.

Blood or Whiskey's set was one that constantly built upon itself. The band came out sounding impressive, and it just got better and better as the night went on. A highlight of the set was a song called "Poxy Pub", a track off their latest effort on Punk Core Records, *CASHED OUT ON CULTURE*. The chorus encouraged everyone to sing along with "a poxy pub, in my neighborhood!" They put on a hell of a show. The Briggs had a tough act to follow, but they proved exactly why

they were the headliners on this tour. If I had to sum up a Briggs' show in one word, it would be showmanship. Not showmanship with flashy lights or smoke screens (other than the natural one created by their audience), but showmanship in the sense of knowing their crowd, knowing that these people paid admission to see music performed rather than just listening to the recordings. It's the classic kind of showmanship that involves holding up your sleek, black guitar for the crowd to see after you've just sustained a chord, or two LaRocca brothers exchanging the front-and-center slot as they trade off lead vocals. It's being the band on stage that's getting the crowd excited—and then getting caught up in the excitement of that very crowd. Then again, maybe that's overly analytical for something as simple as punk. Maybe it's more than enough to just say that The Briggs kicked a lot of ass. But street punk can be a somewhat restraining style of music, and the performance is often just as important as the songs. Luckily, The Clash's influence on The Briggs shows enough so that every song has a bit of a variation. The band constantly tries something new, while remaining punk at its core—and the punk is performed well. The band put on a hell of a show, featuring just a few tracks from their newest album, *BACK TO HIGHER GROUND* (out now on SideOneDummy). The title track (which was also printed on the front of the bass drum head) was played, as well as "Wasting Time" and a couple others. The rest was a solid mix of the older stuff. At the end of the set, the bassist from Blood or Whiskey actually started the chant for another song. The Briggs agreed to do some more, but only if he joined them on stage. A number of Blood or Whiskey's members—and even one fan—joined them on stage for two more songs and a great close to the show.

## SOCIAL DISTORTION SUPERSUCKERS BLACKPOOL LIGHTS

October 23, 2006 @ the Norva  
(Norfolk, VA)

By Jillian Abbene (LIC)

Hailing from Kansas City, Blackpool Lights deliver scratchy blues with



the uncanny vocal style of Tom Petty. I call it "Tom Petty punk rock," with its timely harmonies. The sound was far too mellow for the Supersuckers/Social Distortion lineup. Interestingly enough, if I lean my ear against the floorboards, I could swear I can hear the words "indie." On other bills, that would not be a bad thing. I'm sure we'll be hearing more stuff from these guys in months to come.

Unfortunately for me, the music industry saturated the market with bands coming out of Seattle, so a band like Supersuckers fell through the cracks of my CD repertoire. But that was then, this is now. Perhaps the reason for their staying power lies with their perseverance. Eddie Spaghetti struts on stage with his long, lean legs, diamond-shaped chops, cowboy hat, and "CHiPs" sunglasses. He looks more like the great male stripper doing high kicks than a vocalist slathering on the Southern charm. This just adds to the formula of good showmanship. There is never a dull moment to the set. Danny from Social Distortion joins in a ballad with bubbly keyboards, while Dan Bolton (lead guitarist) breaks out constant, smooth riffs with a crisp rockabilly slant. In "Pretty Fucked Up", a whining guitar brings to mind a redneck-style Backyard Babies. Their fast-pumpin', '50s-style jam has the audience dancing. There's great banter from Eddie, who explains that everyone's aspiration in life is to be a bass player. With that, all of the members take turns playing the bass. Rhythm guitarist Rontrose plays the bass by strumming power chords, while lead guitarist Dan plays a fast, hot killer riff—even holding the bass behind his head. Drummer "Scottzilla" amazes the hell out of me by hanging on the drums and plucking the bass simultaneously. You don't see that at many shows! They warmed up the crowd perfectly for Social Distortion.

With a siren screaming and police lights swirling, out marches Social Distortion through a blood-red backdrop. The spotlight is on vocalist Mike Ness, who's wearing a taxicab cap and a retro blue mechanic's uniform. He passes out red roses to beaming girls in the audience. Social

D looks great. Brent Harding (the bass player) had such exuberance and bounce, wearing an outfit and bass of black and white. Jonny "2 Bags" Wickersham (the rhythm guitarist) releases terror with his hard riffs. After the second song, "Sex, Love, Rock N Roll", Ness's cap is off, and the crew runs through incredibly catchy ballads. They kick it up a notch with their rendition of "Under My Thumb" (twice as fast as the original). The nostalgia I was looking for came with "Mommy's Little Monster" and "Sick Boy". On "Ball and Chain", Danny plays melodic, coasting keyboards to add to the variety. With Jonny drenched in sweat, Brent plucking madly on his bass, Charles Quintana drumming with a steady pounding, and Danny's toe-tapping keyboard backdrop, out walks Eddie Spaghetti to join in on back-up vocals. Eddie's genuine affection for Social D is very cool, and he convincingly plays lead riffs with pursed lips.

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### HALLOWEEN EXPLOSION: RYAN'S HOPE PROJECT: THREEVILLE BLACK TIE BOMBERS

October 28, 2006

@ MoJoe's Coffee House (Orland Park, IL)

Text by William David Jones

Ryan's Hope, the most recent signing of Punknews Records, traditionally holds a local Halloween show. Aside from a lot of metal, the members of the band have always been big fans of The Misfits. Needless to say, Halloween has become a chance for the band to hold this annual event, where they and a number of other bands—and even many of the fans—all dress up to party the punk-rock way. This year's Halloween Explosion featured a packed lineup of bands over the course of five hours; but I was only able to catch the last three.

The first thing that caught my attention was two large structures blocking my view of the stage. And the winner for most tasteful costume goes to: the two guys in the front dressed as the Twin Towers,

complete with miniature crashing airplanes and animated explosions. Most of the girls were dressed in various reiterations of cats, angels, and other sexually-charged things with ears.

Black Tie Bombers were invited from Cincinnati to join the festivities. To celebrate the hallowed occasion, one song after another was announced as "Hellevator: the Elevator to Hell". In reality, they were mostly songs from their full-length, *ART IS EASY*. One member was dressed as a pirate, and another in a duck costume, which was eventually stripped down to duck slippers. The singer was just shirtless, and his pants kept falling down, revealing his ass as he jumped with his bass guitar and sang. Maybe he was Fat Mike? The band's set was solid, as well as entertaining. Their sound recalled bands like The Draft and The Lawrence Arms but had its own edge. The bassist and one of the guitarists were constantly spitting and kicking at each other in a battle that lasted through the end of the set. Definitely enjoyed this band, and I picked up their album after the show, which is a bit raw in terms of production value (but the songs are still good).

Project: Threenville is one of the band's you can usually count on to be in an opening slot when Ryan's Hope is playing one of their local shows. They are both from the Joliet area. I've seen them a number of times now but still can't really get into the music. It's an emotional-sounding punk rock, but I'd hesitate to call it emo. It infuses keyboards to give the band a sound of its own. As I said, I've had trouble getting into them, but the crowd seemed to dig it (as always), with everyone packing to the front to sing along and be part of the show. The band was dressed in wigs of long, golden locks, demin vests, T-shirts, and all the rest to match, making them the cowboys from hell. They were energetic—and very good for pumping up the crowd for Ryan's Hope.

This was the first year I actually got to attend the Halloween show. I'd seen pictures and heard praise of bassist Nick McLenighan's costume. One friend asked me: "You know those homemade costumes you see



looked the perfect part dressed as some sort of barbarian warrior. His natural beard and brawny stance just complemented the heavy fur shawl that was draped over his shoulders, with gigantic teeth (or horns) attached to each side. Vocalist/guitarist Terry Morrow had long, black mesh stockings up each arm, a wig of long, straight black hair, a and pale face. Heavy metal has seen its true revival! Drummer Greg Alltop...well...he was dressed as the drummer for Ryan's Hope. As expected, the band's set was heavy with covers—almost one for every song of their own. A majority of their own music was from APOCALYPSE IN INCREMENTS, while the covers were heavy on The Misfits. Their set was closed with "I Turned into a Martian" (whoa, oh, oh). The cover is available on their Website, [www.ryanshopemusic.com](http://www.ryanshopemusic.com). Another highlight of the set was their completely original "Snakes on a Plane" song written earlier this year. A man in a snake costume came out with a Styrofoam airplane to dance wildly for the duration of the song. The most unexpected and noteworthy point of their set, though, was the band's homage to The Living End. That band has always been a big inspiration to Ryan's Hope, and in concert they often do an instrumental session, with the drums and bass sustaining a beat, while the guitarist shows off his skills in a Southern/blues/rockabilly fashion. Morrow showed some true skill during the session, playing the part of Chris Cheney. He was even speeding it up a bit before the end.

Overall, Ryan's Hope have played better, but the whole purpose of the Halloween show is to have a little fun, do some things that normally wouldn't fly at a regular show (e.g., an excessive amount of covers), and just party with their local fans. Mission accomplished. To comment on this or any other piece you see in SKRATCH, feel free to e-mail [speakup@skratchmagazine.com](mailto:speakup@skratchmagazine.com).

## THE ADICTS

UK SUBS  
PHOTO BY M KELL

## RANCID

## RELIENT K

NINTENDO FUSION TOUR 10/25/06

## THE LOVED ONES

## CATCH 22

## HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS

NINTENDO FUSION TOUR

10/25/06



LESS THAN JAKE



EMERY  
NINTENDO FUSION TOUR  
10/25/06



BECK PEEPING TOM

DETOUR FESTIVAL 10/07/06 DETOUR FESTIVAL 10/07/06

PHOTO BY PHOTO BY ANNETTE OVANNESIAN

ANNETTE OVANNESI.



QUEENS OF THE  
STONE AGE

DETOUR FESTIVAL 10/07/06

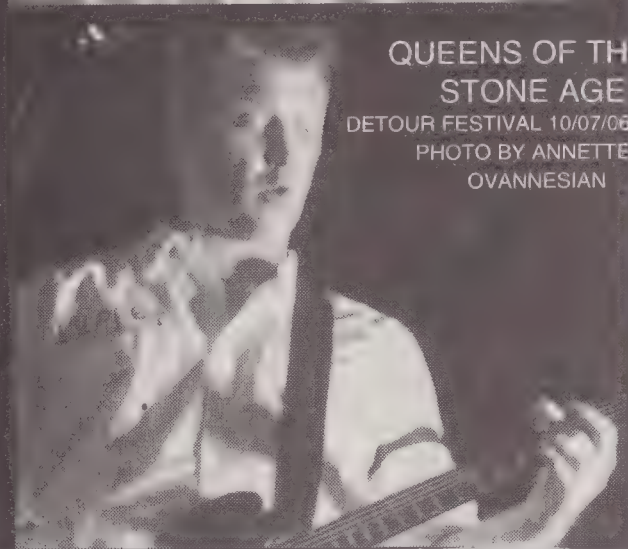
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BLOND  
REDHEAD



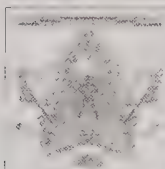




**A HEARTWELL ENDING  
TRUST US, WE LIE  
MEDIASKARE RECORDS**

The debut album from this Long Beach, CA, sextet is fast, frantic, and full of sound and fury. Unfortunately, the fury unleashed on this album seems to override the songs themselves, and so after a while everything sounds the same.

This is hard-edged emo, with nearly every song being about a failing relationship with a cheating girlfriend (or, as the band points out over and over again, a whore). To the band's credit, drummer Robert McCann does do a tremendous job on this disc and pulls some of these tunes out of the fires of mediocrity. The band uses layered vocals, anthemic chorus lines, and lots of guitars, but in the end these guys end up sounding like about 12,000 other emo bands. -Dug



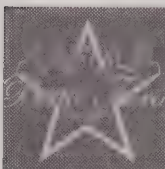
**AGAINST ME!  
AMERICANS ABROAD!!! AGAINST ME!!! LIVE IN LONDON!!!  
FAT WRECK**

Dripping with punk-rock energy, **AMERICANS ABROAD!!! AGAINST ME!!! LIVE IN LONDON!!!** puts your ass on the sticky club floor in the middle of group sing-alongs galore, as this live offering brilliantly captures this Gainesville, FL, foursome's true essence. Appropriately titled for an album recorded at the Mean Fiddler in London, **Against Me!** justifies their carrying of the punk-rock torch by delivering a mix of heartfelt and substantial music from the depths of their guts to a crowd of rabid fans hanging on every pre-chorus. This disc will make you seek these guys out the next time they pass through your town, I guarantee it. [www.fatwreck.com](http://www.fatwreck.com) -Mike SOS



**BAD REACTION  
SYMPTOMS OF YOUTH  
DESTROY ALL**

I'm very impressed with **Bad Reaction**, as their debut LP, **SYMPTOMS OF YOUTH**, is drenched with old-school hardcore punk that leaves the impression these guys were reared on a sumptuous diet of the late-'70s/early-'80s American greats like **Black Flag**, **The Freeze**, **Circle Jerks**, **Reagan Youth**, etc. Fast and hard and edgy—the way it should be—**Bad Reaction** are especially formidable on the darker "Look Both Ways (Before You Cross Me)", "Good Ol' Daze", and this reviewer's particular fave, "Gatorade", an ode to the thirst-quencher, during which the band cleverly name-check other bands who've sang about various liquids, including **Suicidal Tendencies** (Pepsi!) and **Murphy's Law** (beer!). Oh, and like many of the great old troupes (**Bad Religion**, **D.O.A.**, **Code of Honor...**), these guys have a song titled after their band. -Janelle Jones



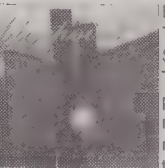
**BETTIE FORD  
LEAGUE OF FOOLS  
LOCOMOTIVE RECORDS**

If I have learned anything about the punk 'n' roll scene that has been slowly growing, it's that you either love the music of despise it. I tend to be the latter, but if anyone is going to convert me, it will be **Bettie Ford**. This band from Germany has released a solid debut that destroys anything **Turbonegro** or **Danko Jones** ever released. Like most of the "artists" in this genre, the songs begin to sound the same after while; but this band's talent shines through the monotony. I think there are at least seven songs with the same guitar riff, but for some reason it just adds to the charm of the whole package. Bringing rock to its simplest form, **Bettie Ford** captures that youthful exuberance that made rock so refreshing in the first place. -Jeff Srack



**BLITZKID  
LET FLOWERS DIE  
HORROR HIGH**

Virginia's horror-punk rockers **Blitzkid** follow the **Misfits**/**AFI** template pretty accurately on this 12-track reissue. Impassioned vocals, grooving melodies with the right balance of metal chug and punk bounce, and a love for all things horror are staples of **LET FLOWERS DIE**, a perfect rocking soundtrack to crank out of the stereo come Halloween time. [www.horrorhigh.com](http://www.horrorhigh.com) -Mike SOS



**BLUEPOINT  
THANKS FOR NOT ASKING....  
SELF-RELEASED**

The debut full-length release from this San Jose quartet is a powerful album full of melodic rock. With **James Lavigna** (ex-member of **Betty's Love Child**) and **Chechi Ciemava** (ex-member of **Curbside**) calling the shots, this band came out of the gate with a head start. At times you could swear these tunes were from a **Weezer** album, while at other moments the music sounds amazingly close to early **Cheap Trick**. This album is loaded with radio-friendly tunes and sing-along choruses. One exception might be the hard-rocking "A Disgrace". I don't think a line like "Your shit still stinks like everybody else" will ever work as a

chorus. Other than that goof, this album is a clever and captivating piece of work. -Dug



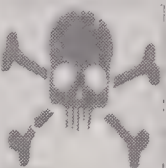
**BURY YOUR DEAD  
BEAUTY AND THE BREAKDOWN  
VICTORY**

Smartly, **Bury Your Dead** haven't felt the need to tamper with their sound too much on their third LP, **BEAUTY AND THE BREAKDOWN**. Though the theme this time around for the boys is fairy tales, the record remains heavy through out, full of crushing guitars, earth-shaking bass, maniacal drum work, and growled/shouted vocals (thankfully, there's nary a clean vocal in earshot). Songs such as "House of Straw", "A Wishing Well", and "Second Star to the Right" show the band in top form; while the one area some may say they DO go "soft," the fine "House of Brick", contains enough of the band's signature brutal elements to fit in with the rest of the album, even though it's infused with a moving melancholy that helps it to be an affecting, apt finale. -Janelle Jones



**CALIFORNIA REDEMPTION/START THE PANIC  
SPLIT CD  
LET THEM EAT**

This punk split-disc by two indie California acts starts off with **Start the Panic**, whose five tracks take a discernible rock 'n' roll approach and inject the proper punk sneer, especially on their cover of "Johnny B. Goode". **California Redemption's** style is rooted more in the hardcore vein, opting to get heavy both musically and topically on their five tracks, which are highlighted by "Religion for Dummies II: A Resurrection". Both acts showcase a raw vibe that hopefully overcomes the current "safety first" style commandeering the spotlight. [www.literrecords.com](http://www.literrecords.com) -Mike SOS



**DAMONE  
OUT HERE ALL NIGHT  
ISLAND RECORDS**

Have you ever wondered what it would sound like if **Avril Lavigne** fronted a band that sounded like a mix of **Poison** and **The Darkness**? Didn't think so. But for the six of you who embarrassingly nodded your head, I give you **Damone**, the most unoriginal act you will hear all year. This band obviously worshipped hair metal and set out to create a record that ripped off every one of their influences—and it sounds even worse than those influences. Over-the-top guitar solos, shout-along choruses, and pointless lyrics is what **Damone** is all about. There is even the "touching" power ballad. This group makes me long for **Faster Pussycat**, and that is a horrible thing. -Jeff Srack



**DAMAGE CASE  
TYRANNY  
PUNKCORE**

From **TYRANNY's** very metal Joe Petagno album artwork, you'd think you're getting a full-on metal album. Wrong. **Dallas** quartet **Damage Case** blend metal's imagery and general heavy tones into its torrid punk-rock attack to form a bastardized version of **Discharge**, **Motorhead**, **Megadeth**, **Strung Out**, and **F-Minus**. Staying on the offensive throughout the 10-track barrage, just check out the pace of songs like "Blood Cell" and "Prepare to Die" to get the fully-trounced treatment. Somewhere between **Slayer** and **The Bronx**, **TYRANNY** crashes through your speakers with boisterous belligerence, begging you to slam dance. [www.punkcore.com](http://www.punkcore.com) -Mike SOS



**DEAD CITY SUNDAY  
THE INDIVIDUALS ARE BORN  
FEUDAL RECORDS**

The power-packed debut album from this Auburn, CA, quartet is a hard-edged blast from one of Northern California's best bands. The vocals by **Zac** on this disc rival the intensity of early **Korn** music, while the band rips through these 12 tracks with a feverish and aggressive style that kills. Fans of **The Deftones** and **Faith No More** will feel the influence in these very radio-friendly tunes. The band has a very popular **MySpace** page, with some good background music and tons of friends; but they seriously need to hire a copy editor for their press release. As for the album, great vocals, good songwriting, killer musicianship—there's very little to criticize here. But how come guys who thank God the most in the liner notes say "fuck" so much? -Dug



**DEAD TO ME  
CUBAN BALLERINA  
FAT WRECK**

Straight from the San Francisco punk scene come **Dead to Me**, a quartet featuring two ex-members of **One Man Army** and one from **Western Addition**. This 11-track endeavor is laden with an unfiltered display of punk like it oughta be, as exemplified by "By the Throat" and "Goodbye Regret". Far-reaching and gritty with a slew of tough melodies, tracks like "Something New" and "Special Professional" intertwine a punk-rock punch with contagious hooks aplenty, at times sounding like an organic merger of **NOFX** and **Sick of it All**. Putting punk before profit without sacrificing stellar songwriting, **CUBAN BALLERINA** is an album everyone who wants to stick it to the man should own. [www.fatwreck.com](http://www.fatwreck.com) -Mike SOS



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### EDGEWATER

WE'RE NOT ROBOTS...

FOREVERGREEN RECORDS



The fourth album from this Dallas-based quintet is a tribute to the spirit of rock 'n' roll. After parting ways with its previous label, Wind-Up Records, where the band was told to change styles because "rock is dead," these guys came back with a steamy album that shakes the speaker cabinet and makes no apologies. Although the first single released from the album, "Caught in the Moment", makes me cringe with the children singing the back-up chorus, the screaming vocals and great lead guitar lines do redeem the track a bit. (Note to musicians: Unless you are Pink Floyd, do not let children sing back-up choruses!) There's plenty too love on the other nine songs on this disc, as these guys rip through these tunes with gusto. Rock on, Edgewater. -Dug

### ELLISON

SAY GOODNIGHT, SLEEP ALONE

CARBON COPY MEDIA



The debut full-length album from this Cincinnati emo quartet comes on the heels of a successful tour with Hawthorne Heights. The label that released the new CD actually belongs to JT Woodruff, lead singer for Hawthorne Heights, so the band has gotten some pretty good backing so far. Ellison's music is hard-driving, melodic rock with a definite emo sensibility. The production is on these tunes first rate, and the 11 tracks on this disc are the kind of lovesick anthems that high-school students everywhere will take to heart as their own personal statement. This is the band that will force MySpace to add bandwidth just to keep rabid fans from crashing the site. -Dug

### FLATBUSH

SEIZE THE TIME

KOOLARROW



Produced by Faith No More bassist/extreme metal guy Billy Gould, Flatbush is a band whose latest, 15-track disc contains spastic bits of speedcore, grind, and avant-garde metal sung in English, Tagalog, and Kapampangan. This Filipino-American connection get politically medieval on your ass, drumming up songs of protest that'd make Joan Baez and Bob Dylan soil their diapers, while implementing a punk-meets-industrial (by way of grindcore) sound that travels a bit more south of heaven than System of a Down. Odd, angry, and expansive, everything from the acoustic coffeehouse-ready rebellion of "Awit Ng Pag-asa" to the sheer panic shock waves sent by the title cut are here to revel in for those on the adventurous side of the room. www.koolarrow.com -Mike SOS

### FLOGGING MOLLY

WHISKY ON A SUNDAY

SIDE ONE DUMMY RECORDS



First off, this CD/DVD package alone is worth the price, as it includes a phenomenal new song ("Laura"), acoustic recreations of old classics, and five electrifying live tracks. But the fantastic documentary that accompanies the CD is the real prize, as it is quite possibly the finest account of the formation and rise of a band ever filmed. Shot over two years, it gives the fan an intimate look into the world of one of the most unique acts going, capturing their remarkable live show while giving a viewer a feeling of what life on the road is truly like. While most band documentaries are only for die-hard fans, WHISKY ON A SUNDAY is for anyone who ever loved music, wanted to be in a band, or is just looking for a great film to pass the time. -Jeff Slack

### GLISS

LOVE THE VIRGINS

TOUGH COOKIE



The debut full-length release from this multi-talented Los Angeles trio is a dark, psychedelic journey into the heart of the American dream. After being taken from an L.A. club gig by Billy Corgan to tour Europe in 2005, the band spent 11 months touring the continent with Corgan, The Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, and The Editors. While on tour, several of these songs were written and tried out in large arena shows. The European response was overwhelming. After recording a few tracks in Denmark, the band returned to record the rest of the album. This is a fantastic album by a brilliant trio who can all play each other's instruments during live shows. The sultry, electronic wall of sound this group achieves is something you won't forget. -Dug

### GUTTERMOUTH

SHAVE THE PLANET

VOLCOM



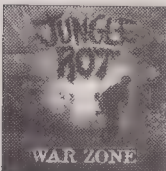
California punk-rock veterans Guttermouth return with their usual smarmy shtick intact on SHAVE THE PLANET, the band's 10th album, which clocks in at a trim 22 minutes. Still snotty after all these years, Guttermouth embodies the way punk rock used to be before everything became marketable and politically correct. Sarcastic and crass, tracks like "My Chemical Imbalance" and "Flacidism" display that, even after all the tours and albums under their belts, these guys are still in the perpetual state of arrested development—and thank God for that. Nonsensical and aiming to offend, Guttermouth's new album placates no one while paying homage to the true spirit of punk. www.volcoment.com -Mike SOS





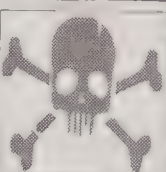
**IMAGIKA**  
**MY BLOODIED WINGS**  
**CRASH**

Metal quintet Imagika hail from the Bay Area but have way more in common with Nevermore than Metallica, yet they do employ the classic Hetfield guitar warmth quite a bit on the 11-track MY BLOODIED WINGS. Armed with an unobtrusive progressive edge, tracks like the quasi-ballad "One More Day" links Iced Earth and Queensrÿche, while "Inhuman" lays down a bad-ass Judas Priest-versus-Blind Guardian vibe. If you're down for a mix of muscular metal and technical prowess, Imagika convincingly hits all the highs and sinks to the lows. [www.crashmusicinc.com](http://www.crashmusicinc.com) -Mike SOS



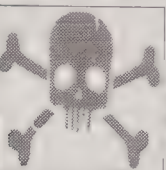
**JUNGLE ROT**  
**WAR ZONE**  
**CRASH**

Death-metal grooves galore are what longtime act Jungle Rot unveils on its sixth offering, the 11-track WAR ZONE. Content with breaking more bones than new ground, the quartet stay in the mid-tempo metal zone for the duration, opting to pound out some simple, catchy, and quite effective ditties about the horrors of war. Chances are that if you dig Cannibal Corpse, Six Feet Under, and Torture Killer, you'll be headbangingly happy with the blissful brutality that tracks such as "Savage Rite" and "Ambushed" release. [www.crashmusicinc.com](http://www.crashmusicinc.com) -Mike SOS



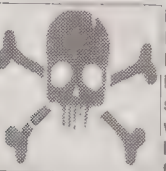
**MAXIMUM RNR**  
**HORNS UP**  
**SELF-RELEASED**

Canada's compact killers (six totally kick-ass songs in under nine minutes) Maximum RNR have put forth an unadulterated hell-raising effort with HORNS UP. Dirty rock meets angry hardcore punk on this mean street, as suspects like Motorhead, AC/DC, Circle Jerks, and Black Flag are cited as bad influences. This quintet rip up the rulebook and destroy all in their path. Pump your fist and yell with these guys as they unleash angst-ridden anthems like "I Hate the Cold" and "Say What" on your hapless ass. Obliterating with pure rock fury, Maximum RNR goes full throttle on HORNS UP. [www.maximumrnr.com](http://www.maximumrnr.com) -Mike SOS



**MY MORNING JACKET**  
**OKONOKOS**  
**RCA RECORDS**

This live double-album is the kind of release you would expect from a supergroup like Yes or Genesis in their heydays, one that sells out huge arenas. Instead, this is an album recorded and filmed in Tokyo on a set that resembled an old-growth forest. This Louisville quintet isn't a true prog band, but these guys are no slouches, either. They've opened for Pearl Jam and use Pink Floyd's lighting director for the live show. The music walks a fine line between introspective, reflective acoustics and reverb-soaked rock with blistering guitar solos. Fans of Phish and The Dead will probably find a lot to like in this collection of indulgent, semi-spacey anthems. The concert movie includes Victorian characters and an alpaca. Eat your heart out, Syd Barrett. -Dug



**NUOVA ETICA**  
**INQUEBRANTABLE**  
**NEW EDEN**

Hatebreed en Español? Sí, my bilingual friend, as Argentinean septet Nueva Etica brings the brutality from south of the border with a blistering 11-track disc. Paying homage to today's heavy hardcore, songs like "Nada de Vos" and "Arder" religiously follow the blueprints laid out by Full Blown Chaos, Sworn Enemy, and the like, throwing out a relentless assault while rarely coming up for air. This album is by no means original, but it is tight, terse, and "siam your head against the wall" fun for you and your buds to beat each other up to. [www.newedenrecords.com](http://www.newedenrecords.com) -Mike SOS



**PARK**  
**BUILDING A BETTER**  
**LOBSTER RECORDS**

The third release from this Springfield, IL, quartet is an angst-riddled cry for love and acknowledgement. Lyrically, the songs tend to come off like slash-and-trash horror movies, all dismemberment and burying of lovers in the earth. While the band's sound is a nice mix of power-pop and emo, the vocals are clear and strong and the artwork on the CD cover and sleeve is terrific, the boys could use an editor. I'm not sure every girl wants to hear lyrics like "Your skin won't amount to shit when you're buried in the earth." Maybe the Morrissey fan base will eat this gloom up, but most people will be put off by the darkness embedded here. -Dug



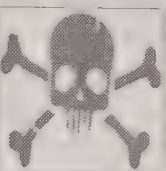
**PREVAIL WITHIN**  
**THE ARCHITECTS OF BROKEN SOULS**  
**MIGHTIER THAN SWORD RECORDS**

The debut album from this Texas four-piece is exactly what one would expect from a young hardcore band: an uneven collection of songs that show a lot of promise mixed with little originality. Sounding a little too close to Rise Against, this act unleashes nine tracks of relentless intensity that touch on the state of our current administration, while leaving the listener with a message of hope and optimism. Yes, numerous bands sing of revolution, but for some reason you really want to believe that it is possible after listening to Prevail Within. While this record isn't going to change the world—or even the punk scene—it is a strong debut that deserves to be checked out. -Jeff Strack



**ROBOTS AND EMPIRE**  
**CAST SHADOWS ON DRAGONS**  
**GLACIAL**

Poughkeepsie, NY, stoner-rock troupe Robots and Empire play with an awkwardly unorthodox metal swagger and a sullen noise-rock aesthetic that'd make this quartet a big hit in a Big Apple basement soiree. CAST SHADOWS ON DRAGONS is the band's latest, nine-track offering that draws as much from Clutch as it does Unsane, as tracks such as "Hydroaxe" and "Attack of the Firepants" leave a sticky residue of crusty guitar riffs and a flurry of pop-you-in-the-jaw rhythms that smart way more than in the physical sense. If Helmet smoked pot with Melvins at a Rollins Band gig, Robots and Empire would be the result, unleashing a caustic concoction of cultish hard rock. [www.glacialrecords.com](http://www.glacialrecords.com) -Mike SOS



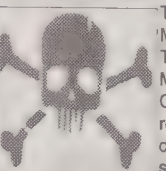
**RUCKUS**  
**RESPECT THE NEXT GENERATION**  
**SAF**

"RESPECT THE NEXT GENERATION"? Um, no. Ruckus makes us long for the days of REAL hardcore (hey, it's still kicking: check out that last hardcore matinee line-up at CB's with Agnostic Front, Sick of It All, Murphy's Law, Madball, and Cro-Mags alum Harley Flanagan with Harley's War). Thankfully, not all of the "next generation" sounds like Ruckus. Absolutely horrible. I like my hardcore sans nu-metal, thank you. Fuck, dude. "Bitch Hunt", "Pessimistic", "Unhappy Days"—all horrendous. But hell, with their "heartfelt" and "tender" passages, the slower "Negative Influences", "Day Late Dollar Short", "Don't Sleep, Dream", and "Self Pity" might be even worse than the aggro, rap-infused bullshit. It's sad that the old-school greats have to see what all their blood, sweat, and tears have spawned. -Janelle Jones



**SAHG**  
**SAHG 1**  
**CANDLELIGHT**

Norwegians are typically admired for their black-metal prowess, yet Sahg (a band featuring members of Audrey Horne, Gorgoroth, and Manngard) is a doomy hard-rock band that gets a bit technical at times. On this project's 10-track excursion, the corpse-paint gets swapped for blacklight, as the gas-huffing seven minutes spent peeking in the kaleidoscope of "Repent" and the Soundgarden-meets-Monster Magnet march of "The Executioner Undead" emanates from your speakers. Trippy in a heavy way and earthy without losing its edge, Sahg's humongous rock sound and scintillating use of dynamics accelerates this savvy group's version of stoner rock to the heights of the greats who dabbled in the murky waters of psychedelic hard rock and the reverie of doom metal. Horned hands way up for this one. [www.candlelightrecords.com](http://www.candlelightrecords.com) -Mike SOS



**THE BANG BANG**  
**MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE "BROTHERS OF THE HEAD"**  
**MILAN ENTERTAINMENT**

Okay, so here is how this works: a fake documentary is released about a fake band (fronted by conjoined twins) called The Bang Bang from London's first wave of punk. This soundtrack is performed by the actors who portrayed the band in the film and was written by Clive Langer, a music producer who has worked with such artists as Elvis Costello and Morrissey. I know this sounds like a recipe for disaster, but somehow it works. Capturing the best of the early punk bands such as Buzzcocks, The Sex Pistols, and The Clash, this soundtrack would actually pass as a decent debut album and is better than three-fourths of the stuff reviewed this month. Give the album and film a chance: I'm sure you won't be disappointed. -Jeff Strack



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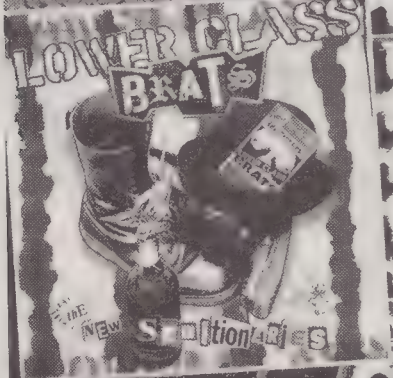


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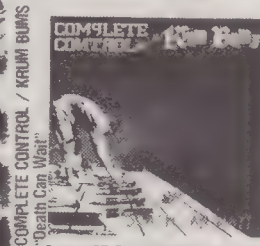
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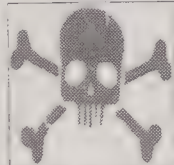


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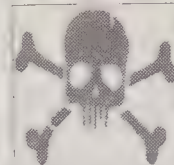


THE CURTAINS  
CALAMITY

ASTHMATIC KITTY RECORDS

Childlike and amateurish, the fourth full-length release from Deerhoof's Chris Cohen sounds like a side project. Teaming up with a few female musicians to plunk out 13 songs that sound like a SESAME STREET album would be a good idea if you weren't trying to write for adults. The musicianship is

rough, sloppy, and sometimes just downright off key on this disc. While several of the tunes do have a somewhat appealing melody in Cohen's soft vocal delivery, the misplayed notes and poor editing that went into this recording detract from any appeal this candied pop might have. On "Green Water", Cohen tells the listener, "Don't try to follow me now." It sounds like good advice for any musician who hears this disc. -Dug



THE MATCHES  
DECOMPOSER  
EPITAPH

The sophomore release from this Oakland-based quartet is an amazing collection of disparate styles and sounds that owes as much to Oingo Boingo as The Clash. With 13 tracks recorded by nine different (and very well-known) producers, the band was able to work through all its influences in an

album that alternates between slower, circus-type pop music and thrashing rock and danceable techno. On tunes such as the power anthem "Little Maggots", it's hard not to hear Danny Elfmann in the quirky vocals. Rancid's Tim Armstrong pitched in to help write and produce the club-influenced techno tune "You (Don't) Know Me", where the band puts out a fierce beat that should get any heart pumping. This is a tremendous album by one of the best groups around. Get it. -Dug



THE MUTTS  
I US WE YOU  
FATCAT

Well, that sucks. A quick perusal of The Mutts' MySpace page shows the U.K.-based band are defunct as of late September. But at least they leave us with I US WE YOU, a great record to remember them by. With a very swaggering, sleazy '70s

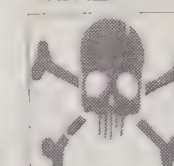
vibe, these guys rip it up on the nine songs. From the raucous, punked-out "Dog on Dog" and the excellent stoner rock of "Don't Worry" to the darkly seductive title track, the bluesy swagger of "Take Yer Pick", and the rollicking closer "You've Got a Limit", it's essentially one gem after another. To be sure, The Mutts will be missed. -Janelle Jones



THUNDERBIRDS ARE NOW!  
MAKE HISTORY  
FRENCH KISS RECORDS

This dance-punk act has one major problem: they are either really good or really bad; there doesn't seem to be any middle ground with them. Some of the songs on this album are brilliant (e.g., "The Veil Comes Down" and "Why We War"), while others are just awful ("Shit Gold", "Sound Issues/Smart

Ideas"). If this band can record an entire album that doesn't have six songs of filler, then they might be in business. Until then, your best bet is to buy individual tracks and hope that this act puts enough effort into making a whole album worth buying. -Jeff Sack



TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A.  
TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A.  
SELF-RELEASED

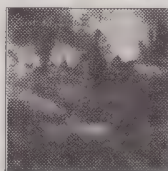
Shame on me for pretending I don't like pop music. I've said that I don't like pop/rock for years...and I guess I've been wrong all along and simply too afraid to admit it. It took a five-piece band from Portland, OR, called To Live and Die in L.A. to open my ears to the catchy riffs and epic, ballad-like vocals

found in a majority of it. Lead singer/songwriter Jake Portrait and the four others from past Portland indie bands have put together an 11-track debut record that could easily be played on anyone's local rock station or found on the soundtrack of a new Hollywood motion picture. Priding themselves on being nonconformists when making music, they say they try to create four distinct sounds: epic, rock, indie, and pop. It's safe to say that tracks such as "Anesthesia", "Can't Feel a Thing", "Scars", and "Listen" considerably cover these classifications. -Chris Miller



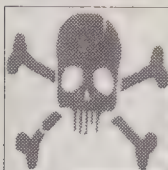
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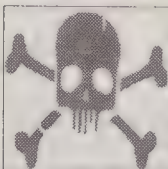
**TORCHBEARER  
WARNAMENTS  
CANDLELIGHT RECORDS**

The album starts with the sound of a sonar ping in the distance. As the ping grows closer, you know that something powerful is coming. The guitar riffs are beaten out of their instruments in a sort of orchestrated chaos that is not heard often enough. On several tracks, you can hear faintly and in the background what sounds like The Trans-Siberian Orchestra on steroids. Superior to the guitar riffs are the breakdowns, which flow with the obvious intent to maim. One flaw is that the speed and rhythm of this album is obviously better suited to hardcore vocals, as opposed to the black-metal growls found here. The sinister sound is fitting in some areas of the disc, but I'm often dying to hear a scream or decipherable lyric. It's not a deal-breaker, but the right vocals would make this a truly great album. -Jeff Waldman



**TRENDKILL  
NO LONGER BURIED  
CANDLELIGHT RECORDS**

This metal is competitive with the mainstream of testosterone-driven, identity-crisis-inspired madness that we have out there. These guys don't take their cues from intellectual or emotional hardcore; rather, the nuts to the grindstone, unapologetic and pissed-off spawns of bands like Machine Head, Fear Factory, Lamb of God, etc. Trendkill is not a rip-off or anything, but there is something familiar about this thunderous collection of music. The heavy swells of guitar and cleanly terrifying vocals aim to please a select bunch of headbangers. If you like the previously-mentioned and their genre, then you may find Trendkill right up your alley. I recommend this album. -Thomas Murray



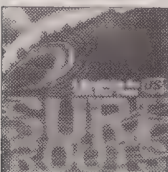
**TRIPLE THREAT  
INTO THE DARKNESS  
BRIDGE NINE**

Right from the get-go, old-school revivalists Triple Threat remind one of two great bands: Minor Threat (the name, the straight-edge aspect) and Black Flag (the strikingly similar logo lettering). And once one hears INTO THE DARKNESS, a total Black Flag feel emerges, what with the inherent darkness and plenty of hard-hitting songs that sound as if they might veer into madness at any moment, including "Obliterate", "This War", "Jealousy II" (homage to DAMAGED?), and the title track, mainly because of the cool changing of tempos and unique riffs. And the ENTIRE aesthetic of "Time to Disconnect" the background whispers; discordant guitars; slow, dragging tempo; and the "I need some time, some time to clear my mind" lyrics recalls "Damaged I", as it sounds like the band are truly on the edge (but still not nearly as much as old Henry). -Janelle Jones



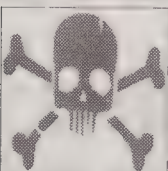
**VARIOUS ARTISTS  
GO-KART VS. THE CORPORATE GIANT 4  
GO-KART**

Go-Kart Records' fourth installment of their compilation series unleashes a smattering of some of the best the label has to offer, from the globally-conscious punk of Rifu to the ska-punk flavor of World Inferno Friendship Society to the atmospheric metal of Ira And, it's a steal, boasting 22 tracks at the amazing low price of \$3.98. Surely if you're reading this reviews, there's bound to be something on this disc for you, so cough up the \$4, keep the change, and rock out already you cheapskate! [www.gokartrecords.com](http://www.gokartrecords.com) -Mike SOS



**VARIOUS ARTISTS  
SURF ROOTS  
RESIN MUSIC**

This is the first of two volumes of reggae-influenced surf music by artists such as Steel Pulse, Michael Franti & Spearhead, Slightly Stoopid, Mishka, Souldier of Fortune, and LB Shortbus—to name just a few. The disc benefits the U.S.A. Surf Team. I am not much of a reggae fan, so not surprisingly, I preferred the numbers here that were more rocking, such as Too Rude's "Good Day to Die", The Expendables' punk-rockin' "Set Me Off", Michael Franti & Spearhead's soul-influenced "Feelin' Free", and The Beautiful Girls' bluesy "Morning Sun". If you are a reggae fan, you'll probably like this; but even if you're not, there's enough variety here to ensure that there will be something the surf-loving music fan will like. And if you buy it, you're supporting a good cause, not just giving money to the corporations that run the record business. So go ahead, buy it! -tekolote



**VIOLENT NINE  
(ANY WONDER)  
PKG ENTERTAINMENT**

The first full-length studio album from this Boston-based quintet is a slick, seamless collection of radio-friendly alternative rock. Vocalist Ben Casoli's fine singing on this disc separates this band from the legions of wannabes who can't find a lead singer to carry a tune. Unfortunately, Casoli's vaguely emo lyrics don't pack the same punch as the music. The lyrics are so generically about love, belief, and finding hope that it seems as if Violent Nine is a

Christian band looking for a secular label. The most glaring misfire on this album, though, is the CD sleeve insert. While the photos are nice and the lyrics easy to read, every song in the insert is out of order from where it appears on the actual disc. Where's the proofreader? -Dug



**WAR OF AGES  
PRIDE OF THE WICKED  
FACEDOWN**

Erie, PA, quintet War of Ages concocts an East Coast hardcore-meets-West Coast fashioncore sound on the 10-track PRIDE OF THE WICKED. Trading off metal guitar runs and barking hardcore yells, cuts like the title track and the late-'80s thrash-meets-metalcore structuring of "Aftermath" should elicit quite a few pile-ons and other violent expenditures of energy. Killswitch meets Atreyu is what War of Ages conquer, with shades of VFW beatdown hardcore thrown in to keep it rooted in the real. [www.facedownrecords.com](http://www.facedownrecords.com) -Mike SOS



**WHITE DEMONS  
SAY GO  
SONIC SWIRL RECORDS**

Of all the genres of music floating around the underground, the one that I am most fearful of becoming popular is this sleaze-rock nonsense that I keep running into as opening acts for punk bands, acts such as Turbonegro and Danko Jones, who play the same exact song for a half-hour, shattering my ear drums and ruining my evening. So along come White Demons to help continue with the dumbing down of music with their debut record, SAY GO. I don't know what's worse, the racket that this band tries to play off as rock or the fact that people actually dig this shit. According to them, "It's All About the Rock". Unfortunately for us, they are the ones playing it. -Jeff Strack



**WOLVERINE  
STILL  
CANDLELIGHT**

Swedish mope-metallers Wolverine return with STILL, a weighty nine-track affair whose early Queensryche, Dream Theater, and Katatonia influence reign heavily. Somewhat straying away from the metal side of the fence to explore mainstream prog-rock territory on tracks like the lucid "Nothing More", the quintet still manage to bare their teeth on tracks like the sprawling "And She Slowly Dies", evoking comparisons to Opeth. If you like your theatrical metal with darker hues, songs like "Sleepytown" is somberly engaging à la Dredg, while "Bleeding" churns out the goth-meets-prog metal tendencies the band is best known for. Despite these moments giving way for a more toned-down metal side, this band still serves from a crock pot of melancholy, helping Wolverine remain a solid, somber unit. [www.candlelightrecordsusa.com](http://www.candlelightrecordsusa.com) -Mike SOS



**WYDOWN  
NOISE OF AMERICA  
SELF-RELEASED**

In St. Louis, Wydown have been working hard to stand out amongst the Midwestern Saddle Creek rabble. Unfortunately, they are unable to convey the one thing you need (or at least need to be able to feign) to make it big: heart. Wydown have been playing shows and releasing albums for years, so it's clear that they care about their music...but somehow, what they produce is still devoid of feeling. NOISE OF AMERICA isn't noisy at all: it's a calm, metered, foot-tapping good time. But there's no hook, and no discernible passion. In "No More Never Mind", Wydown are less restrained; but until that passion is palpable throughout the album, they will remain hometown heroes only. -Erika Owens



**XXX MANIAC  
HARVESTING THE CUNT NECTAR  
SELFMADEGOD RECORDS**

XXX Maniac seems unafraid of the public's response to HARVESTING THE CUNT NECTAR. Jesus, this album is disturbing. It is impossible not to judge this book by its cover. They are dismembering dead girls, for fuck's sake! That said, the music is actually pretty entertaining—but nothing compared to the intros and in between song samples. The samples themselves make the album worthwhile with their hilarious but depraved originality. An AMERICAN PSYCHO kind of humor—only a lot more so. The tracks are brief, brief, and intense, an unapologetic comment on sick, twisted impulses having to do with brutalizing and shaming women. The creators of this album are warped, morbid individuals. Pretty much as bad as it gets. Seriously, it is sick. Enjoy. -Thomas Murray



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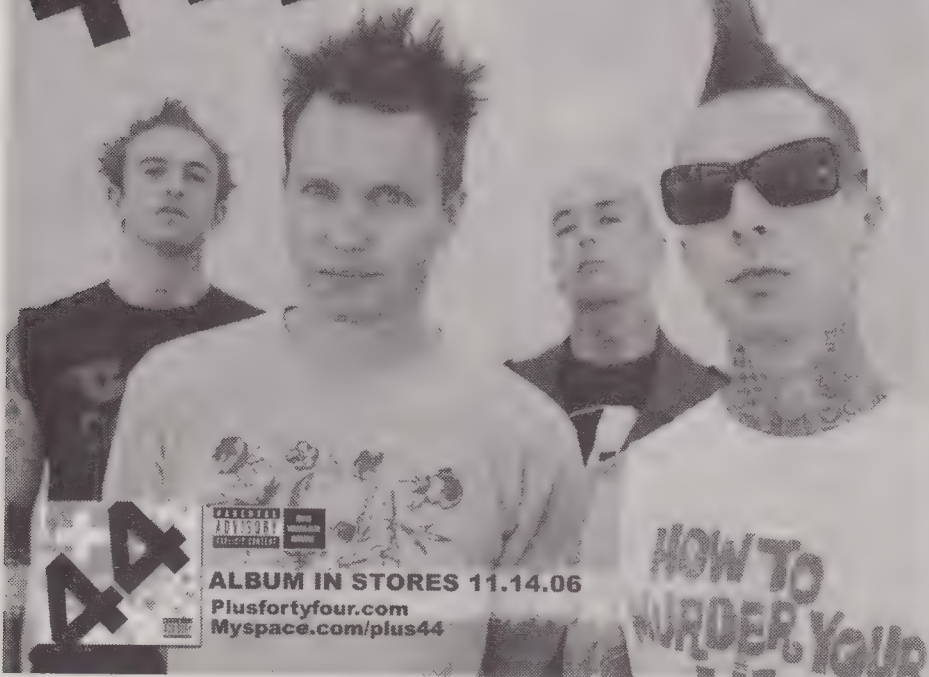


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# NICOLE ZUCK

Nicole  
Zuck  
Interview by Avra  
Kouffman  
Photos by George Medina

Nicole Zuck is one of the country's best female bowl skaters. She's also the only So Cal resident I know of who has no computer and checks her email "once a week, if that." Nicole's laid-back attitude carries over to her sport. If it ever starts to be more about contests than about having fun, she says, "that's when I'll probably stop." Aside from skating wicked bowls, Nicole's into staying healthy, sewing clothes and traveling. At first, she seemed a little hesitant about being interviewed, but once we started talking, her natural enthusiasm for skateboarding bubbled up and she was super-sweet and helpful. She even phoned from the airport so SKRATCH could get to press on time:

**SKRATCH: Let's start in the future and work backwards. What do you see yourself doing in ten years?**

NICOLE: If I can, I'll be involved with some skateboard companies or fundraising or skate parks, hopefully traveling a bunch still pretty much, enjoying my life!

**SKRATCH: In five years?**

NICOLE: Hopefully, still skateboarding and traveling. Eventually, I want to travel more to different countries. I hope I'm still having fun, you know, just doing what I do.

**SKRATCH: What tours or contests are you looking forward to in the next year?**

NICOLE: One coming up in Arizona, in Peoria, a bowl contest. That one will be real fun. And if they end up having a girl's contest in Australia at the Bondi Bowl, I would like to be there, as well, because I've never been there. I'd love to go.

**SKRATCH: If you go, will your sponsors send you? How does that work?**

NICOLE: Well, right now, I have a few sponsors, but ... I was really into getting all that going, but it just seems like, if you don't try to get out there and get it, it's not going to happen. For so long, I was really trying to get all these good team sponsors, but a lot of companies, they want girl riders, but they don't necessarily have the funding. They want to give you this, give you that, free product, but not a lot of them have tons of money to give to girls. You've kind of got to support your own way.

**SKRATCH: That's tough to do, if you want to go to Australia and places like that ...**

NICOLE: Yeah! You just have to find the companies that are down and have the money. I just really don't have time for that, you know.

**SKRATCH: Who sponsors you right now?**

NICOLE: Basically, Independent Trucks and Route 44 Skate shop, a skate shop in San Diego.

**SKRATCH: How come San Diego County draws almost every pro skater? You all seem to live there.**

NICOLE: It's because it's warm, there's a lot of pretty fun stuff to skate, it's all pretty close, all the industry's there, all the companies are there. If you want to network and get sponsors, that's the place to be. It's not really necessarily L.A. It seems it's more Orange County.

**SKRATCH: Well, you were in Orange County today. What did you do today?**

NICOLE: We were just relaxing, me and my boyfriend. One of the owners of Emies was having his 40th birthday and he has a mini-









one of my friends started a whole new girls' skateboarding movement, which was cool. You know, it showed that you can still be a girl, wear makeup, wear clothes, and still skateboard.

**SKRATCH:** How long do you expect to pro skate?

**NICOLE:** Basically, as long as my body and energy can hold up. Some girls after a while tend to seem to lose the funness out of it, and I think, as soon as that happens, as soon as people start caring more about contests than they do about just having fun, I think that's when it's probably stop, because it's really starting to be real competition, and it's not the fun I want to be

**SKRATCH:** So, wait, you're not competitive, or you are?

**NICOLE:** I can be but when people care more about the contests and this and that more than just having fun, then I stop. I just like getting up there and traveling and skating different stuff and showing other girls you can do it, and being a positive role model without anything.

**SKRATCH:** What's your favorite skateboard magazine?

**NICOLE:** Thrasher. I used to love Big Brother, but they don't have that one. What about Skateboarder, Skateboarder, and Skateboarder?

**SKRATCH:** Some skaters promote feminism really heavily. But from what you've been saying, it seems like you don't. What's your attitude to skating? Do you care about the publicity side of it, or not really?

**NICOLE:** Not really. I don't know how they want to... I'm down to become myself wherever, wherever I want, but I'm not down to be that... I don't know, it's just that publicity side. It's not about



boarding anymore. It's like, what are you doing? You're trying to do all this other stuff and it's distracting you from what you wanted to do in the first place. I mean, I'm down to show up to events and show my face and get support, but I'm not down to do that just for publicity, you know what I mean?

**SKRATCH:** That makes sense. What do you want to have accomplished by the time you leave pro skating?

**NICOLE:** Just basically getting the message out that it's all about having fun. Just enjoy yourself, have a good time. You meet the coolest people through skateboarding... I have, at least... people you'd never, ever meet if it weren't for skateboarding. I think that's awesome. You know, good friends are hard to come by! It's amazing, so many different types of people skateboard. You'll meet them wherever — skate parks, contests. It's a little family, in a way.

For more on Nicole, check out her website [www.nicole-skate.com](http://www.nicole-skate.com) and her blog [www.nicole-skate.com/blog](http://www.nicole-skate.com/blog). You can also find her on MySpace and Facebook. Nicole is also a member of the Thrasher Skateboard Team.

**"YOU'VE  
KIND OF GOT TO  
SUPPORT  
YOUR OWN WAY."**





Trick: Bobby La Bounty  
Location: Huntington Beach, CA  
Sponsors: Powell  
Photographer: Bobby LaBounty  
bobbylab@gmail.com

# Steve Steadham

300°

## Steve Steadham

ue Systems  
PRODUCTION





$\alpha = \beta$

Trick:

Frontside Indy

Location:

Huntington Beach, CA

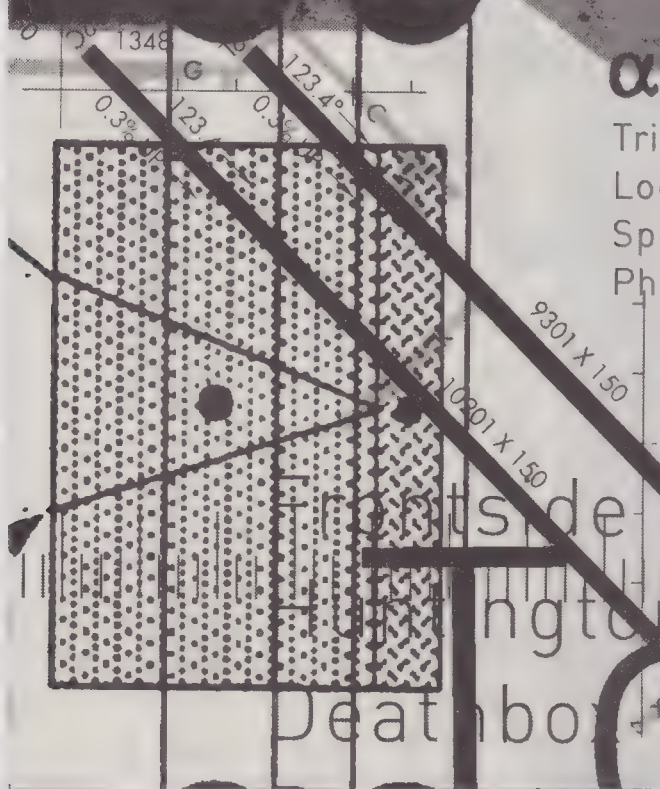
Sponsors:

Deathbox

Photographer:

Bobby LaBounty

bobbylab@gmail.com



Frontside Indy  
Huntington Beach, CA  
Deathbox





Tony Magnusson

Magnus

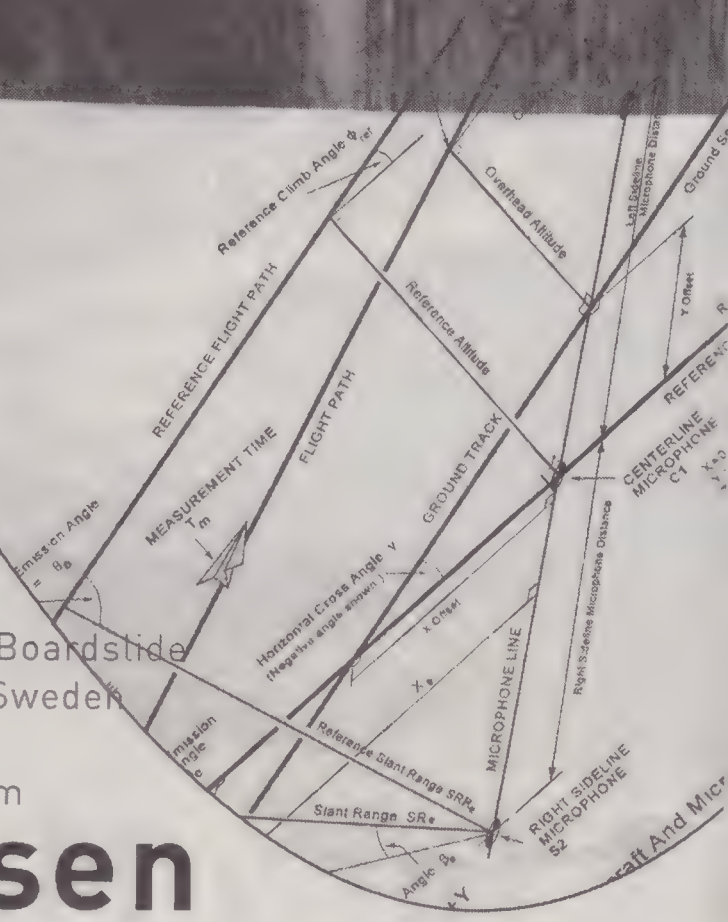




Trick: Backside Rock n Roll Boardslide  
Location: Steppenside, Malmo, Sweden  
Photographer: Jonathan Hay  
jhay@haywirephoto.com

Marcus Olsson

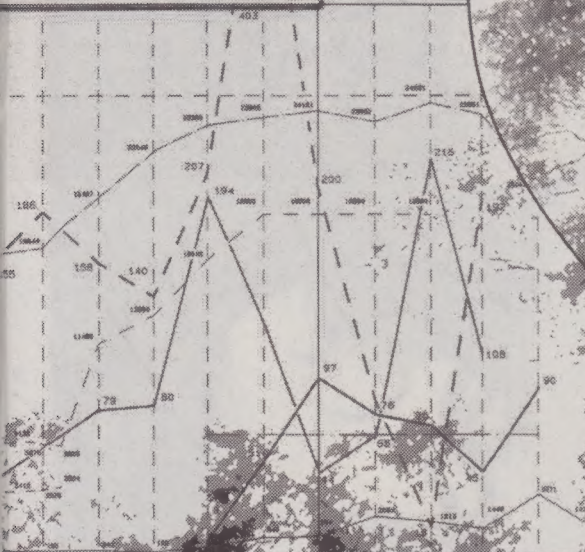
Olsson





# Alex Vargas

KONZEN  
E



Trick: Switch Rock n Roll  
Location: Brookhurst Skate Park  
Anaheim, CA  
Photographer: Beth Stirnaman  
pix4ucheap@yahoo.com

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photo: Daniella Renee



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